STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 62

16p

TERROR TOMB

STARBLAZER

ON THE FRINGES OF KNOWN SPACE, IN THE STAR SYSTEM OF VENCETI, WHERE MAN HAD TO STRUGGLE EVEN TO EXIST, SETTLERS FROM SOL SYSTEM STILL FOUND REASONS TO FIGHT AMONGST THEMSELVES. THE PROTECTIVE FORCES OF GALAC-SQUAD, AND THEIR SPECIALIST OUTFIT OF FIGHTING SCIENTISTS, WAGED A CONTINUOUS BATTLE TO KEEP THE PEACE AND TO SUBDUE THE PIRATES WHO ABOUNDED IN THE REGION. ONE OF THESE ATTACKS LEAD TO THE DISCOVERY OF A MYSTERIOUS CRAFT . . . A TERROR TOMB.

TERROR TOMB

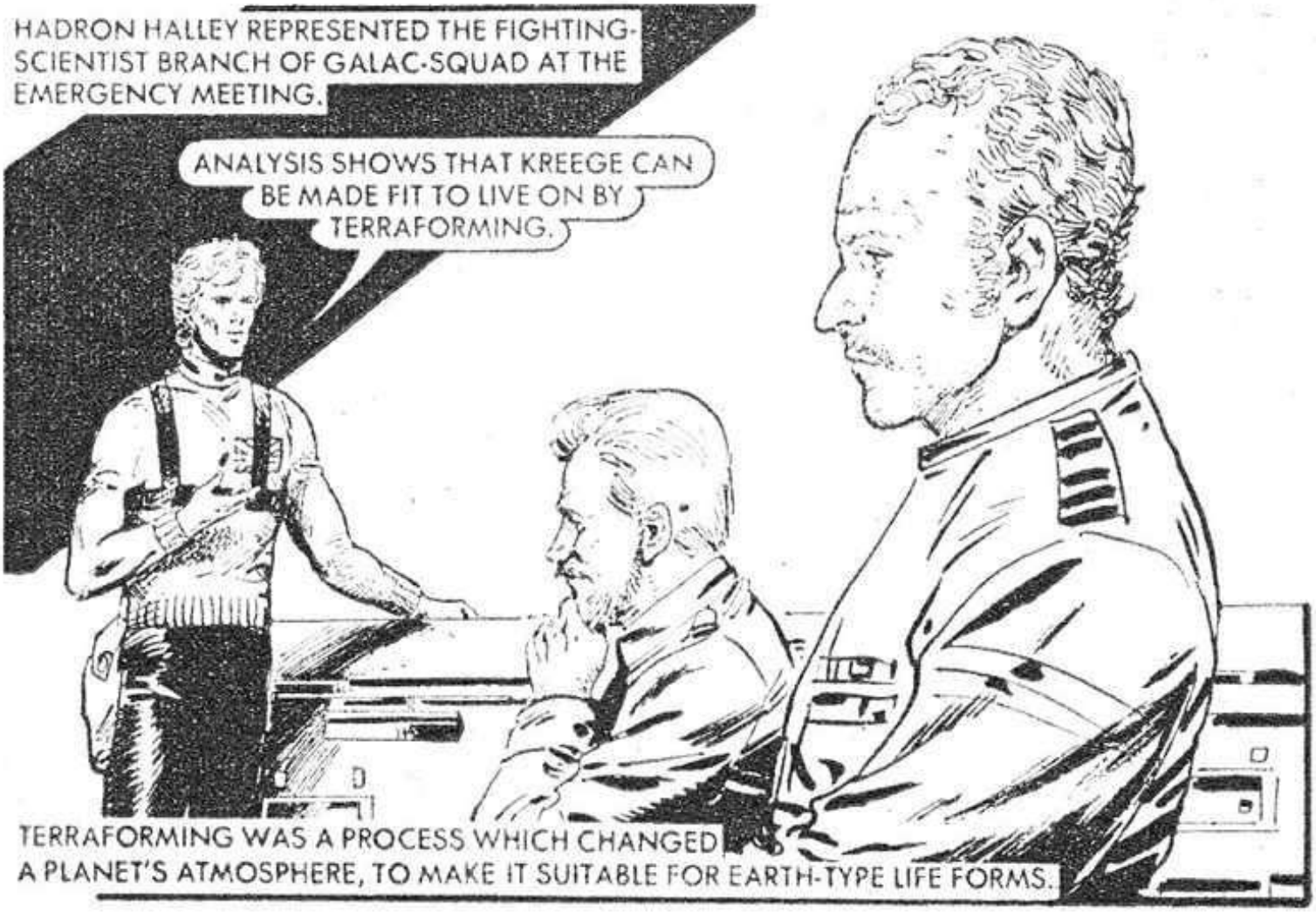
THE VENCETI STAR FIELD SUPPORTED NUMEROUS PLANETS, WHERE PIRATES ESTABLISHED BASES FOR RAIDS INTO THE FREIGHT LINES.
HEAVE TO, SUPPLY SHIP — OR THE NEXT SHOT RUPTURES YOUR HULL.

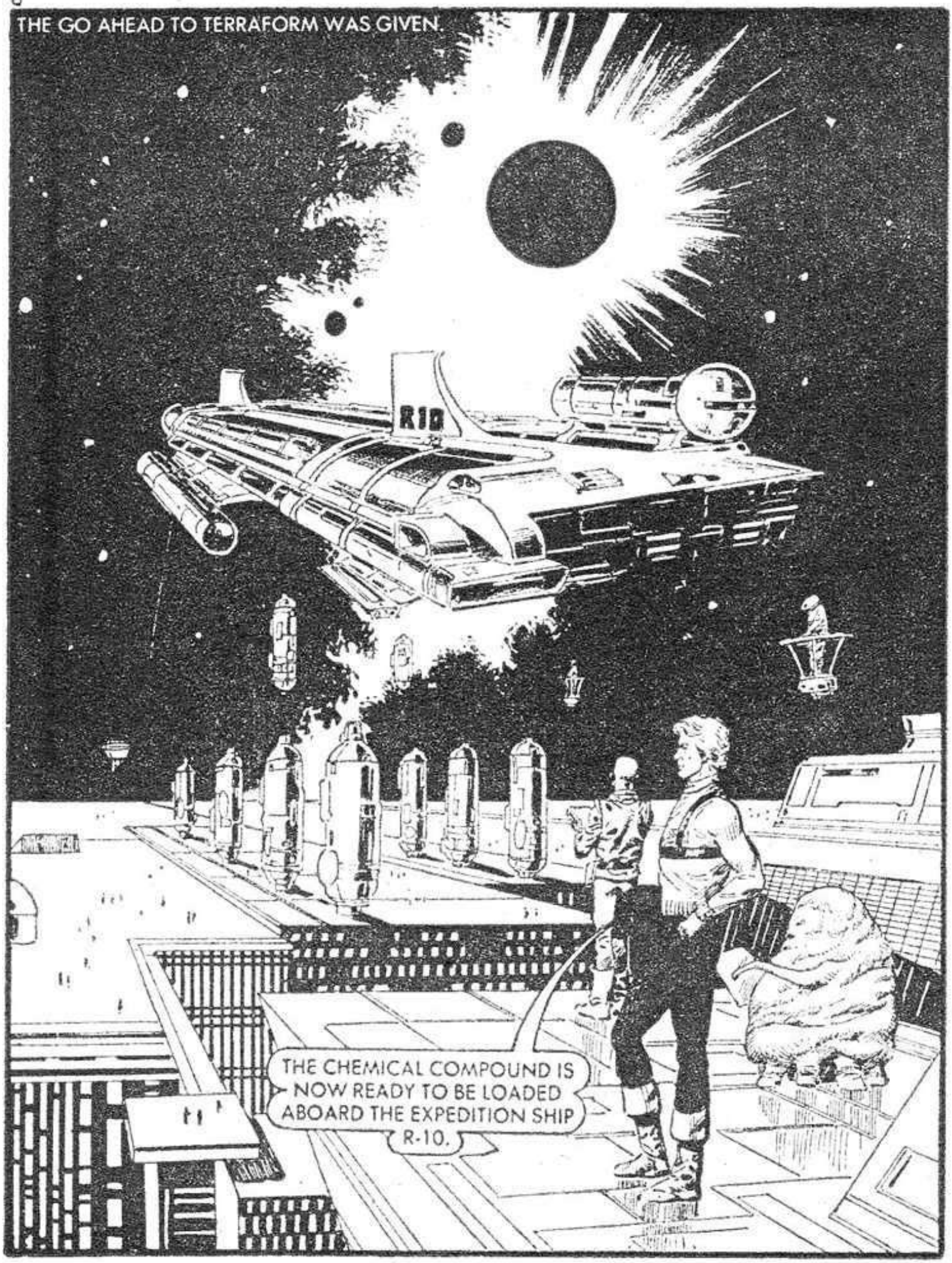
ON BOARD THE SUPPLY SHIP—
WE MUST SUBMIT, THERE'S NO ONE TO ANSWER A CALL FOR HELP IN THIS SECTOR OF SPACE!
THE PIRATES STRIPPED THE FREIGHTER.
MOVE IT . . . TAKE FOOD AND FUEL . . .

THE PIRATE VESSEL DEPARTED LEAVING THE SHIP WITH NOTHING.
WHEN WILL THESE PIRATES BE STOPPED?

AT STARBASE ONE — THE HEADQUARTERS OF GALAC-SQUAD.
ANOTHER MAYDAY FROM THE VENCETI SYSTEM . . . FREIGHT 43A PLUNDERED.
WE MUST SEND AN ESCORT FORCE.

THE ONLY PLACE WHERE YOU COULD HOPE TO POLICE THE WHOLE VENCETI SYSTEM FROM IS THE PLANET KREEGE, BUT IT HAS A POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE.


HADRON HALLEY REPRESENTED THE FIGHTING-SCIENTIST BRANCH OF GALAC-SQUAD AT THE EMERGENCY MEETING.
ANALYSIS SHOWS THAT KREEGE CAN BE MADE FIT TO LIVE ON BY TERRAFORMING.
TERRAFORMING WAS A PROCESS WHICH CHANGED A PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE, TO MAKE IT SUITABLE FOR EARTH-TYPE LIFE FORMS.


THE GO AHEAD TO TERRAFORM WAS GIVEN.
R10
THE CHEMICAL COMPOUND IS NOW READY TO BE LOADED ABOARD THE EXPEDITION SHIP R-10.

THE R-10 WAS LOADED AND LAUNCHED TOWARDS THE VENCETI SYSTEM.

SPACE WARP CO-ORDINATES FIXED FOR HYPER-JUMP TO KREEGE.

R10

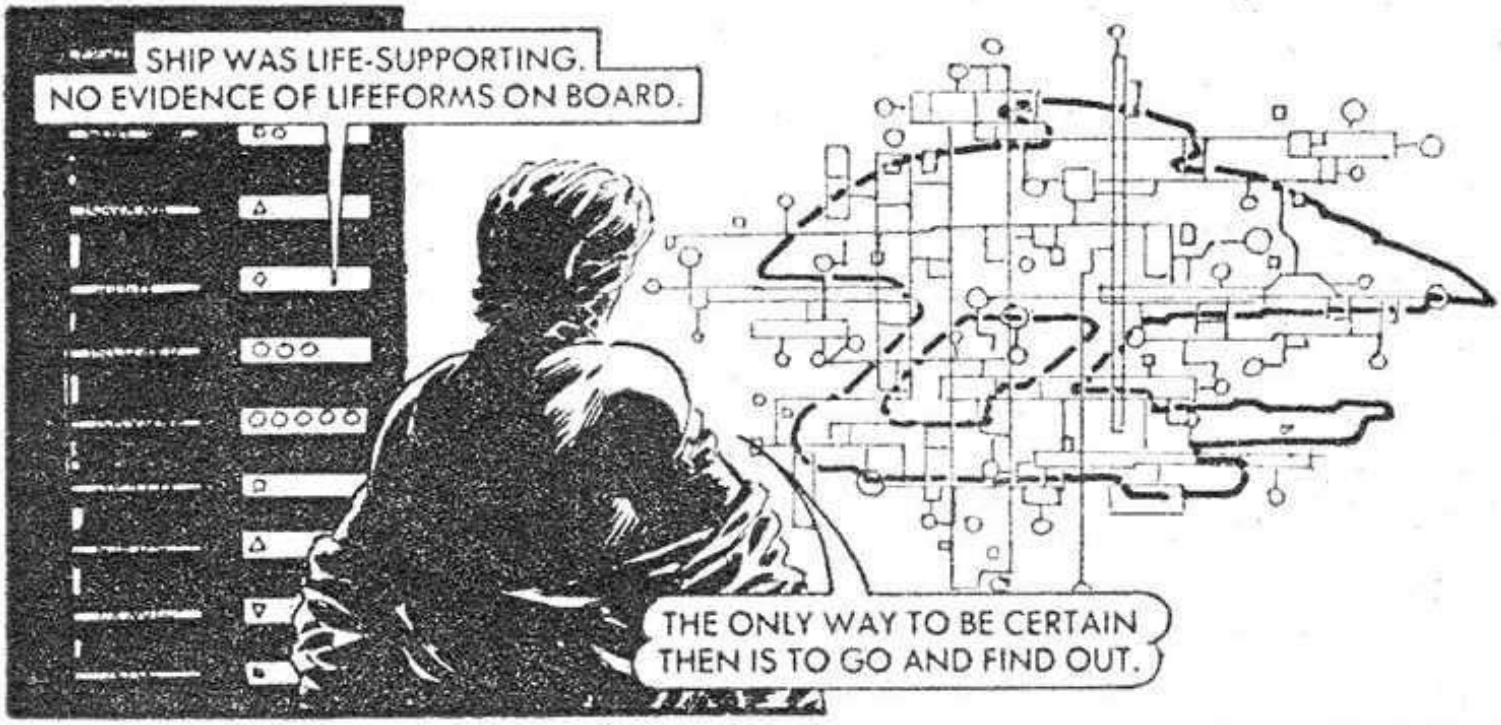
R-10 PREPARED TO HYPER JUMP.

STRAP YOURSELVES DOWN YOU PLANETEERS, I'M ABOUT TO ACTIVATE THE UNIFIED DRIVE.

EVEN AS R-10 BLASTED TOWARDS KREEGE, A DERELICT ALIEN CRAFT CIRCLED THE PLANET.

AS THE R-10 MATERIALISED OUT OF WARP SPACE AN ALARM OPERATED.

COMP READS NO LIFE. CRAFT IS ALSO OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN.
COMPUTER . . . GIVE ME A SECTIONAL ELEVATION.


SHIP WAS LIFE-SUPPORTING. NO EVIDENCE OF LIFEFORMS ON BOARD.
THE ONLY WAY TO BE CERTAIN THEN IS TO GO AND FIND OUT.

HADRON SUITED UP AND GRAVHOPPED FREE OF THE AIRLOCK.
NO SIGN OF ANY LIFE.

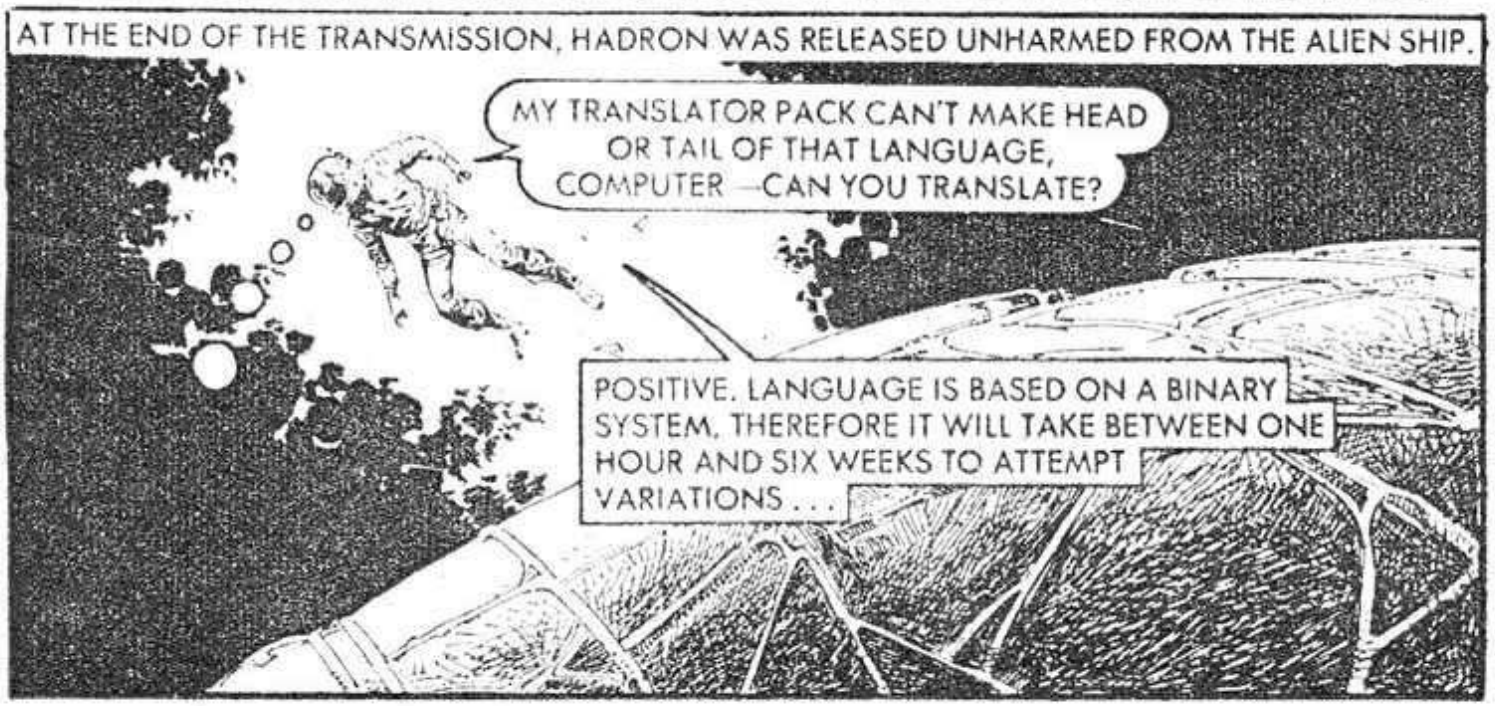
THIS LOOKS LIKE A HATCH BUT I CAN'T SEE A WAY TO GET IT OPEN. R-10 . . . SEND IN CUTTING CREWS.

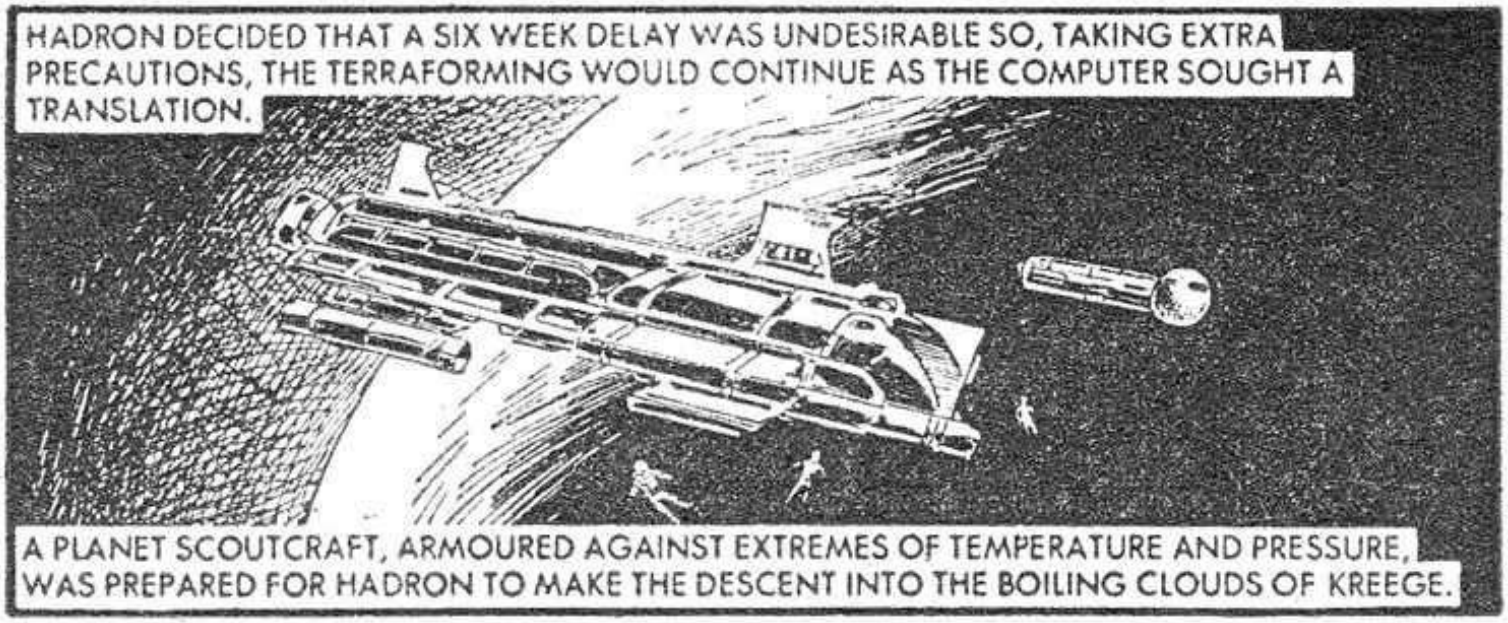
AS HADRON BEGAN TO CUT INTO THE HATCH, OTHER CREWS CAME OUT TO JOIN HIM.

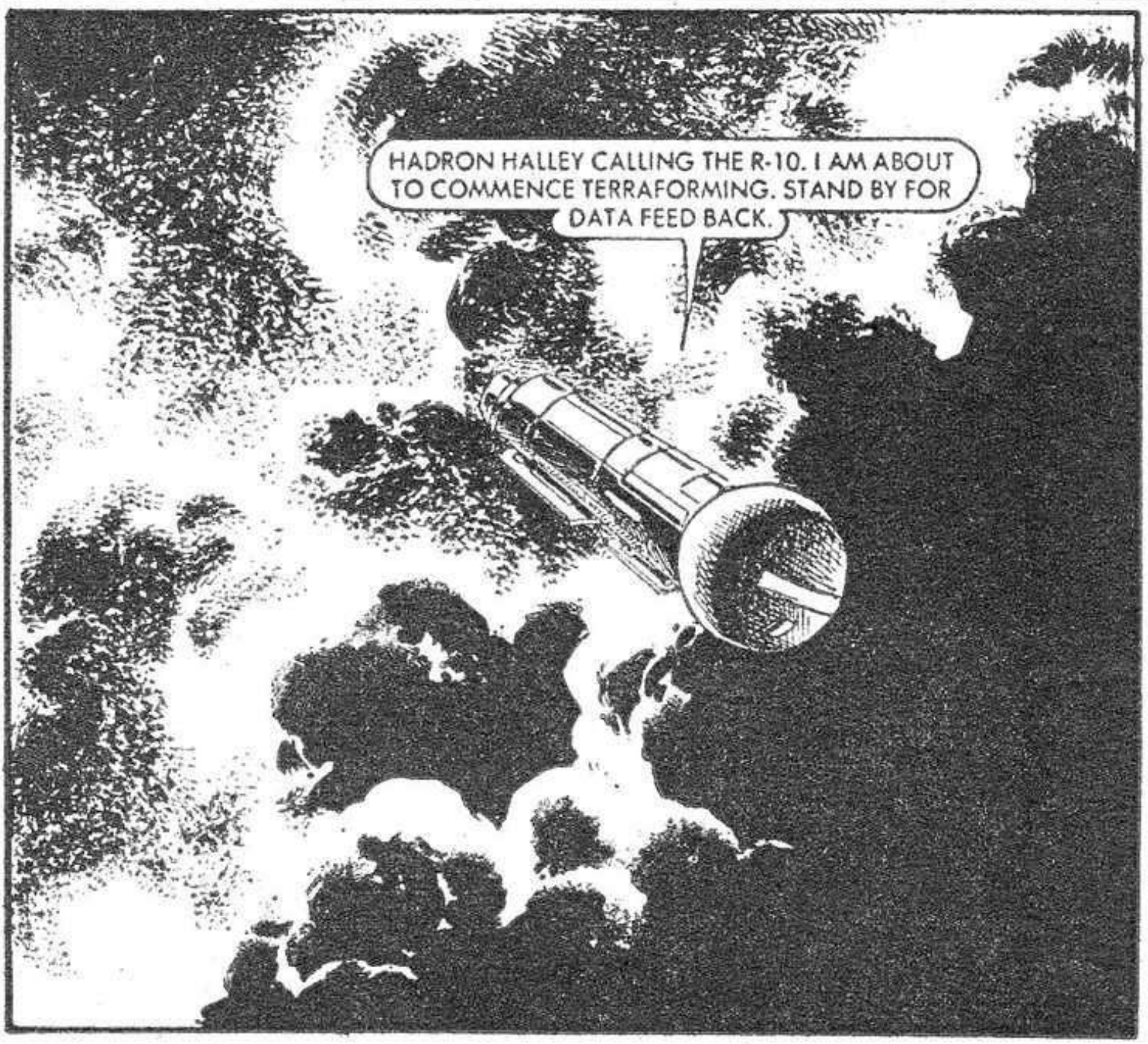
SUDDENLY A HULL SECTION OPENED AND HADRON, HELD BY GRAB ARMS WAS DRAWN INTO AN OPENING.
JUPE! CLEAR OFF THE REST OF YOU!
THEY'VE GOT ME SHUT IN BEYOND HELP — WHOEVER THEY ARE!
THEY HAVEN'T KILLED ME YET, SO I LIVE IN HOPE.

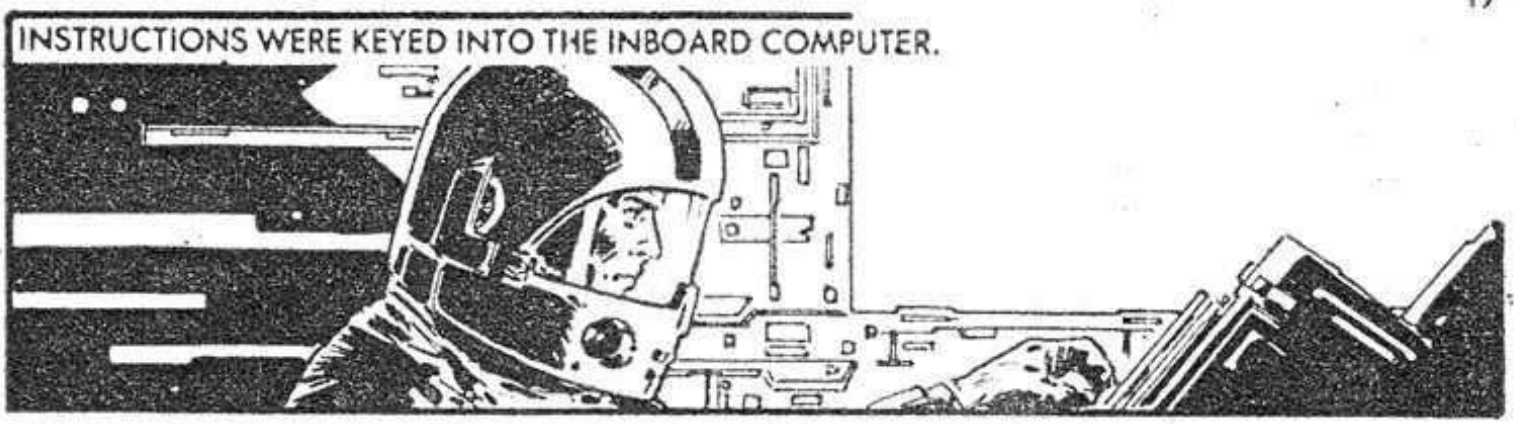
A HUGE WALL SCREEN FLICKERED TO LIFE —

AN EVIL HUMANOID FACE APPEARED ON THE SCREEN, AND A STRANGE LANGUAGE BROADCAST.




HADRON DECIDED THAT A SIX WEEK DELAY WAS UNDESIRABLE SO, TAKING EXTRA PRECAUTIONS, THE TERRAFORMING WOULD CONTINUE AS THE COMPUTER SOUGHT A TRANSLATION.
A PLANET SCOUTCRAFT, ARMOURED AGAINST EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE AND PRESSURE, WAS PREPARED FOR HADRON TO MAKE THE DESCENT INTO THE BOILING CLOUDS OF KREEGE.

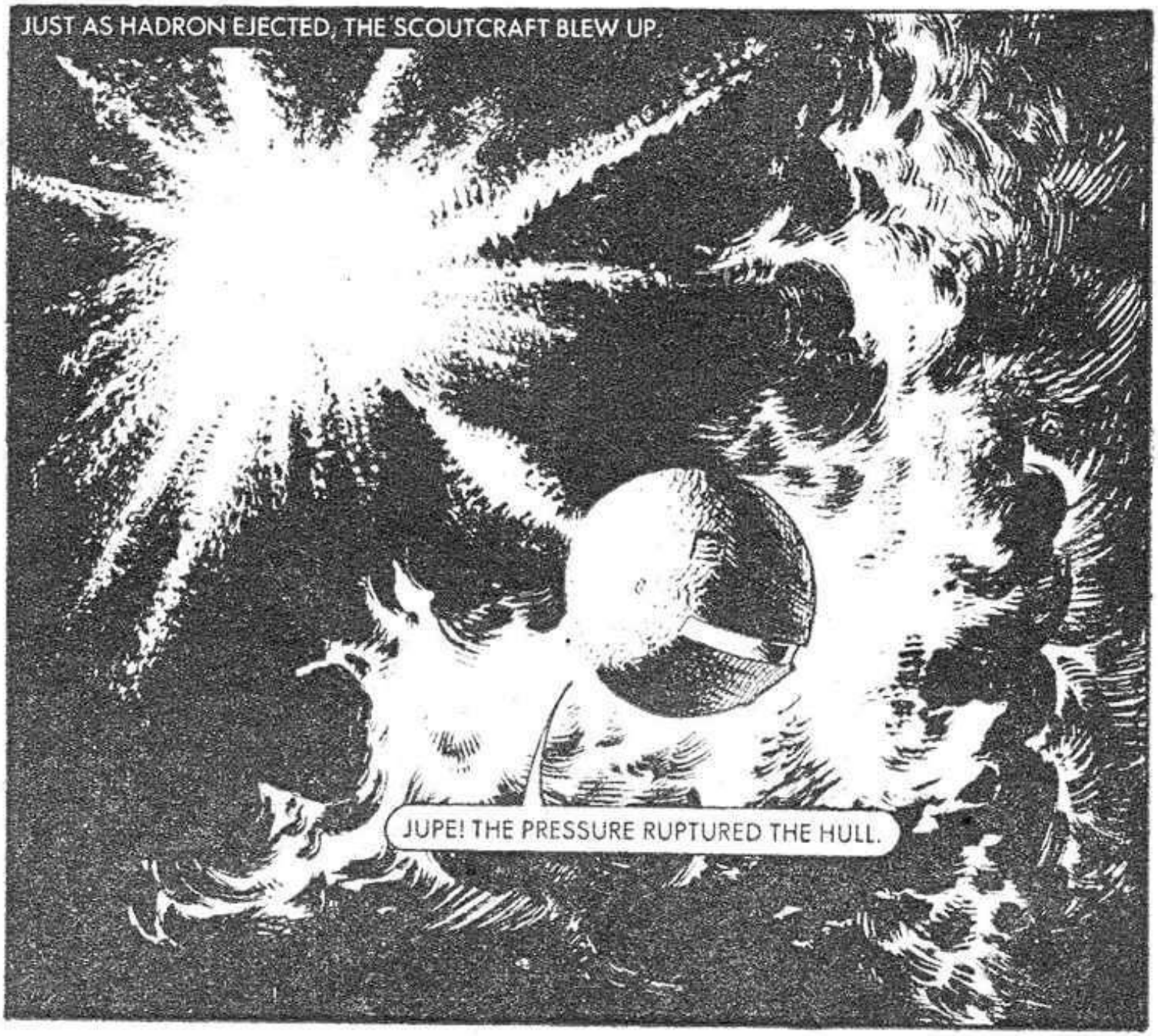

HADRON HALLEY CALLING THE R-10. I AM ABOUT TO COMMENCE TERRAFORMING. STAND BY FOR DATA FEED BACK.


INSTRUCTIONS WERE KEYED INTO THE INBOARD COMPUTER.

AN ORGANIC CHEMICAL WAS PUMPED OUT WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO BEAT THE CRUSHING PRESSURE OF THE KREEGE ATMOSPHERE.

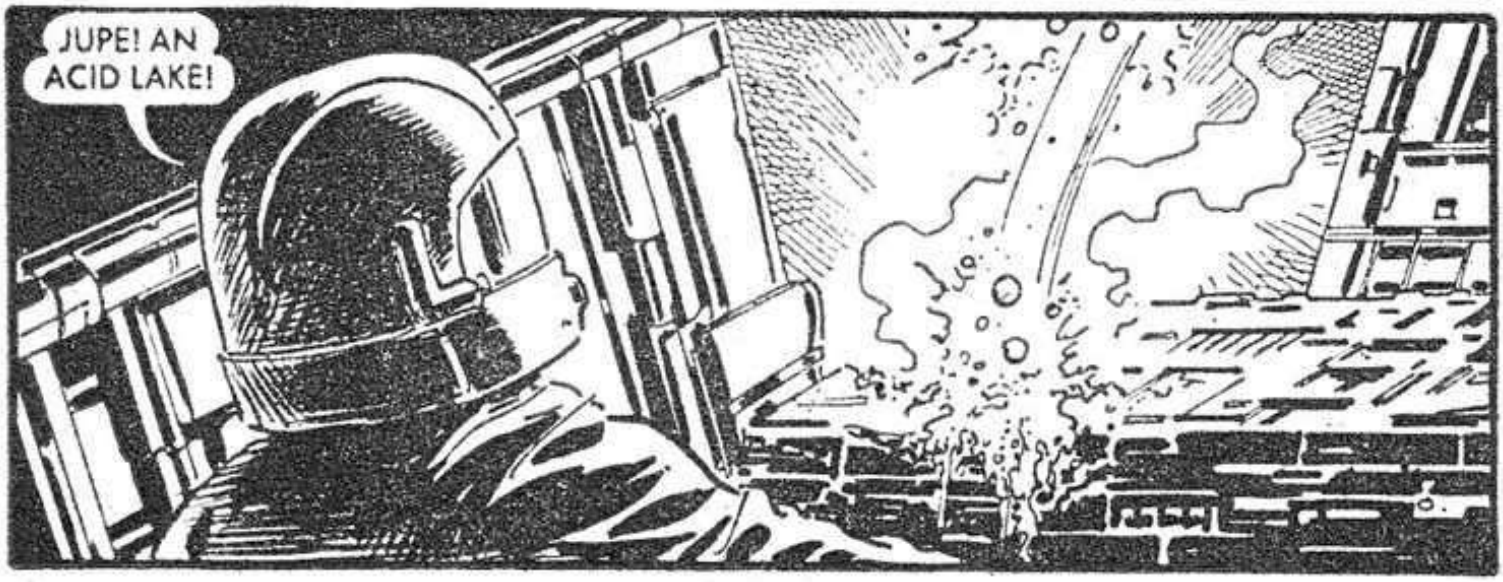
HALLEY TO R-10 . . . CONDITIONS UNSTABLE. FIX TRACTOR SAFETY LINE.
BUT BEFORE ANYTHING COULD BE DONE, THE SCOUTCRAFT BEGAN TO SHUDDER.
EXTERNAL PRESSURE IS DROPPING RAPIDLY! THE CRAFT'S NOT GEARED FOR NORMAL FLIGHT. IT'LL PLUNGE.

IT'S OUT OF CONTROL — I'LL HAVE TO EJECT.


JUST AS HADRON EJECTED, THE SCOUTCRAFT BLEW UP.
JUPE! THE PRESSURE RUPTURED THE HULL.

NO CONTROL!

THE LIFEBOAT PLUNGED INTO THE BOILING SEAS OF KREEGE.

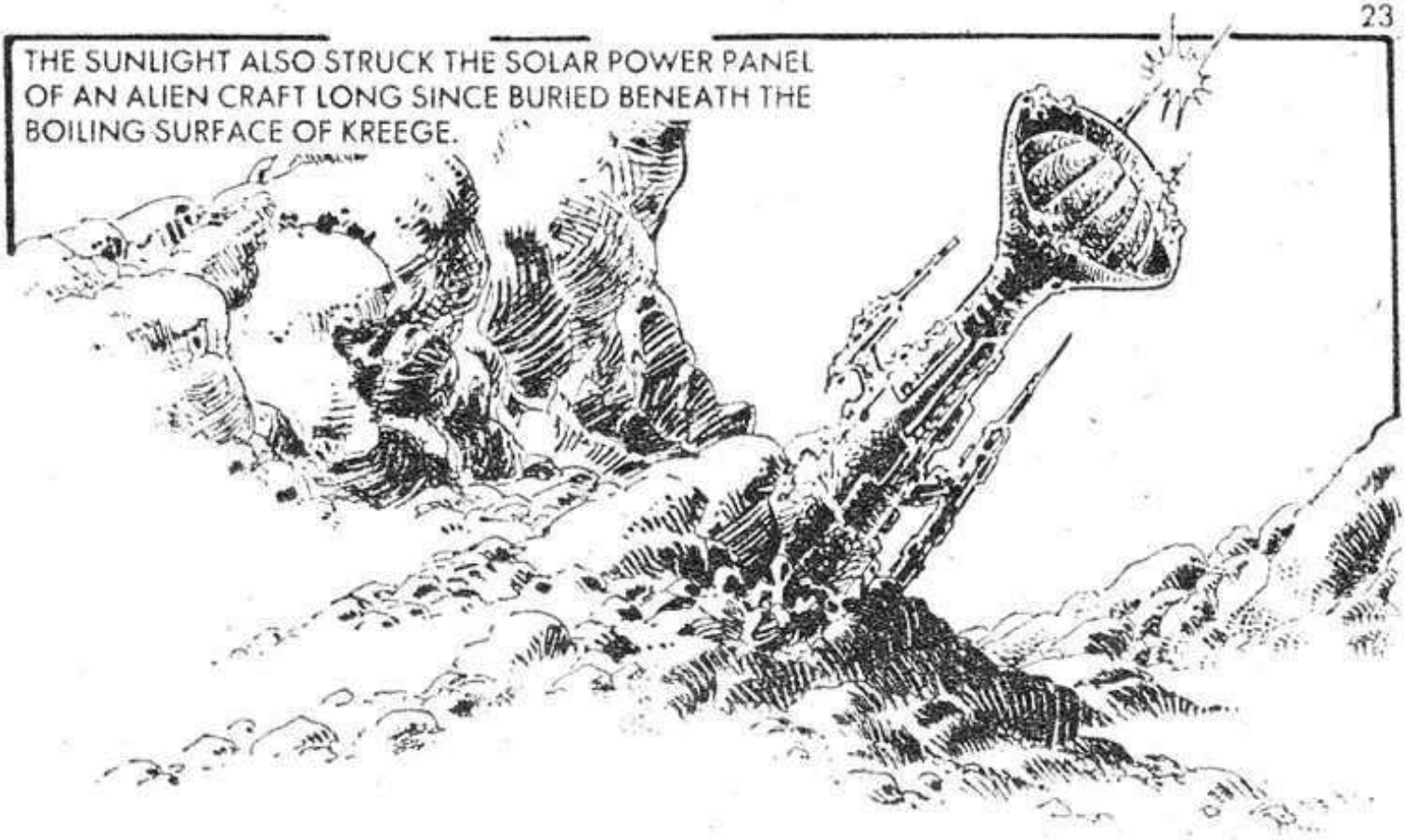


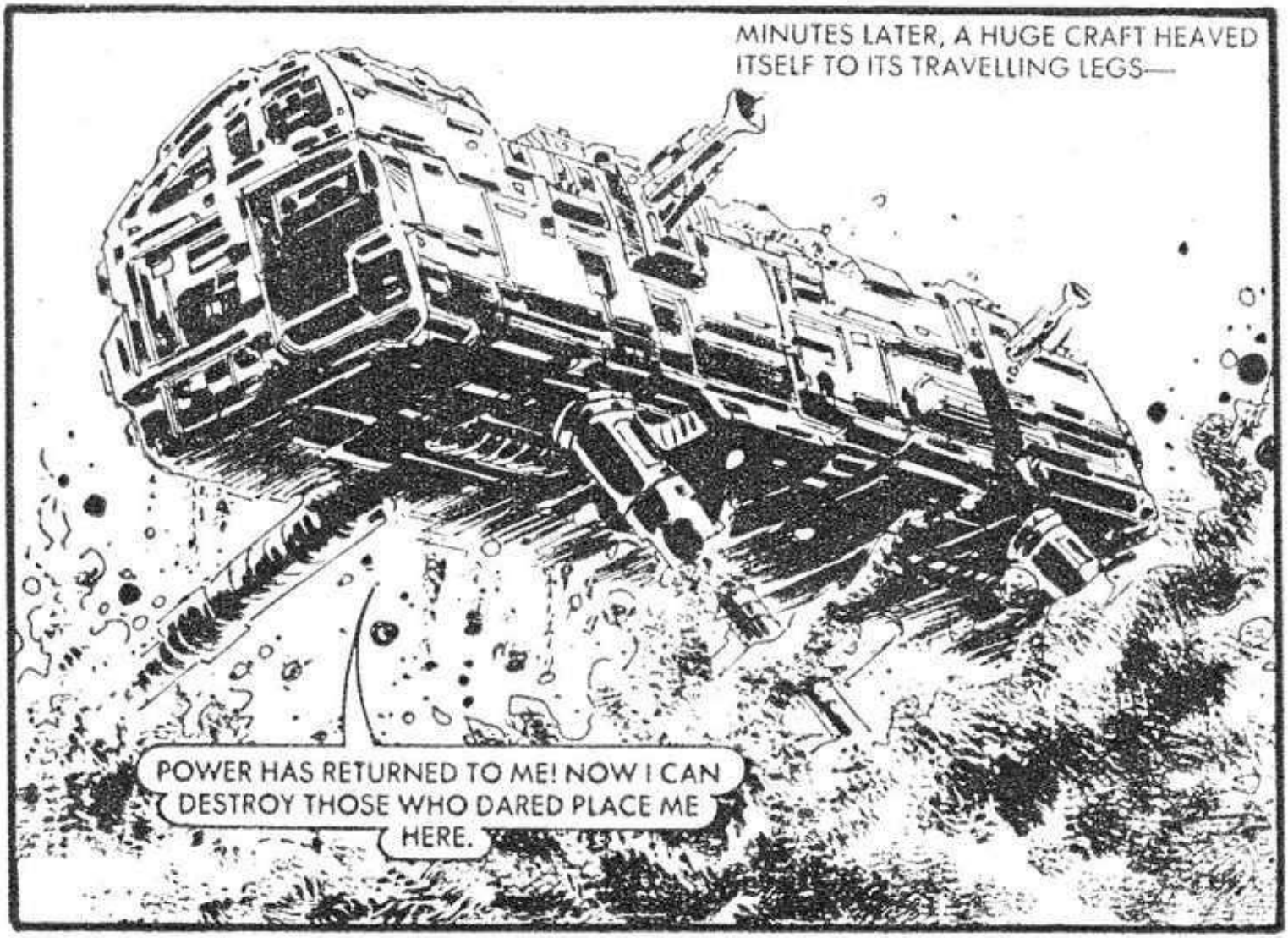
HADRON'S CRAFT WAS THROWN ABOUT BY THE WILD SEA OF ACID.
STUCK ON A ROCK . . .
I CAN'T HOPE TO KEEP THE ACID OUT. I'LL BE ENGULFED.

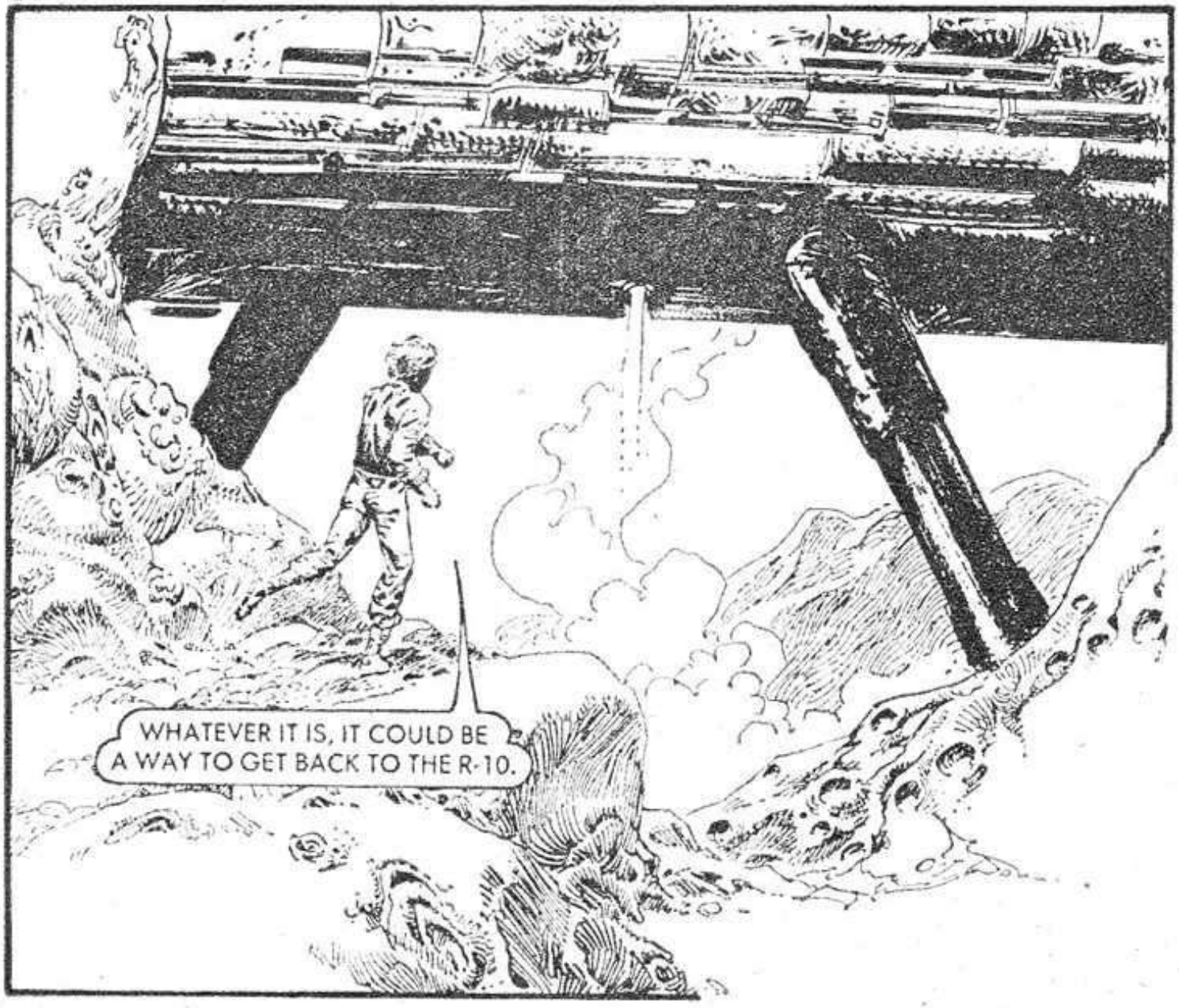
BUT THE TERRAFORMING CHANGES IN THE ATMOSPHERE REDUCED PRESSURE AT THE SURFACE OF KREEGE. NEW ROCK FORMATIONS SURGED UP FREE OF RESTRAINT.

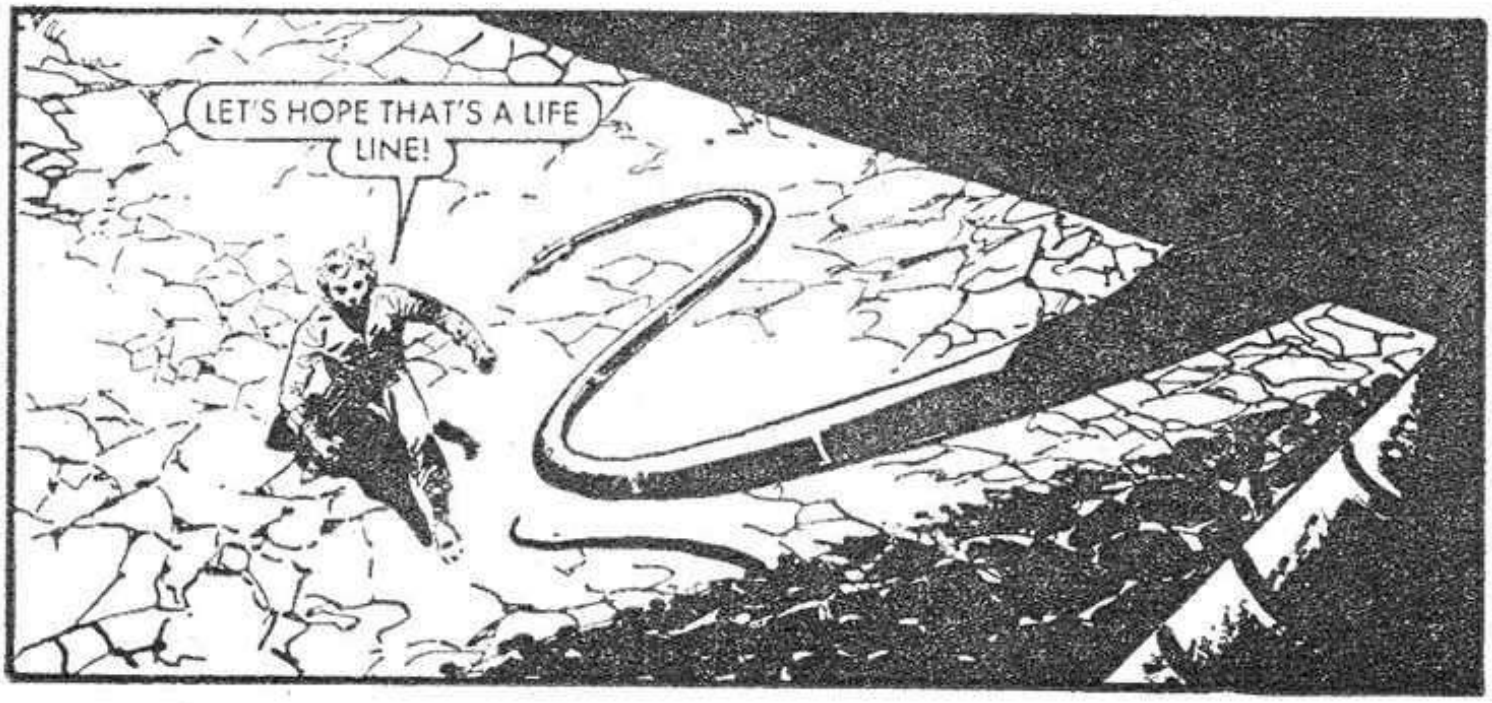
SAVED, BY THE PLANET ITSELF!

HADRON REMAINED SAFE FOR TWO WEEKS AS THE CHAIN REACTION CLEARED THE CLOUDS. WITHOUT THE DENSE CLOUD COVER, THE ENORMOUS TEMPERATURE AND PRESSURE AT THE SURFACE FELL TO EARTH-LIKE LEVELS. STAGE TWO WAS NATURAL EVOLUTION, AS SUNLIGHT REACHED THE SURFACE OF KREEGE FOR THE FIRST TIME.


THE SUNLIGHT ALSO STRUCK THE SOLAR POWER PANEL OF AN ALIEN CRAFT LONG SINCE BURIED BENEATH THE BOILING SURFACE OF KREEGE.


MINUTES LATER, A HUGE CRAFT HEAVED ITSELF TO ITS TRAVELLING LEGS—
POWER HAS RETURNED TO ME! NOW I CAN DESTROY THOSE WHO DARED PLACE ME HERE.

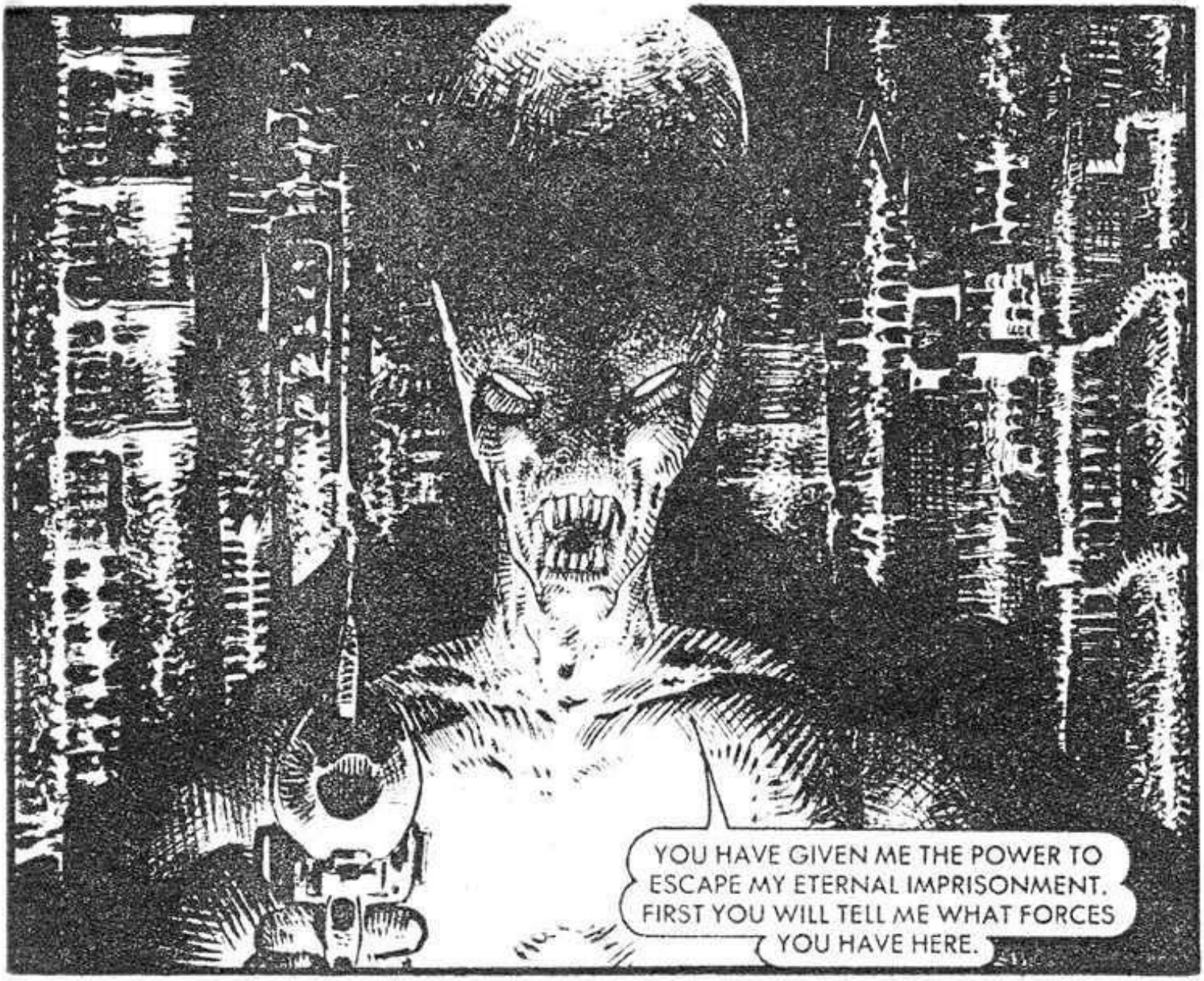

WHATEVER IT IS, IT COULD BE A WAY TO GET BACK TO THE R-10.

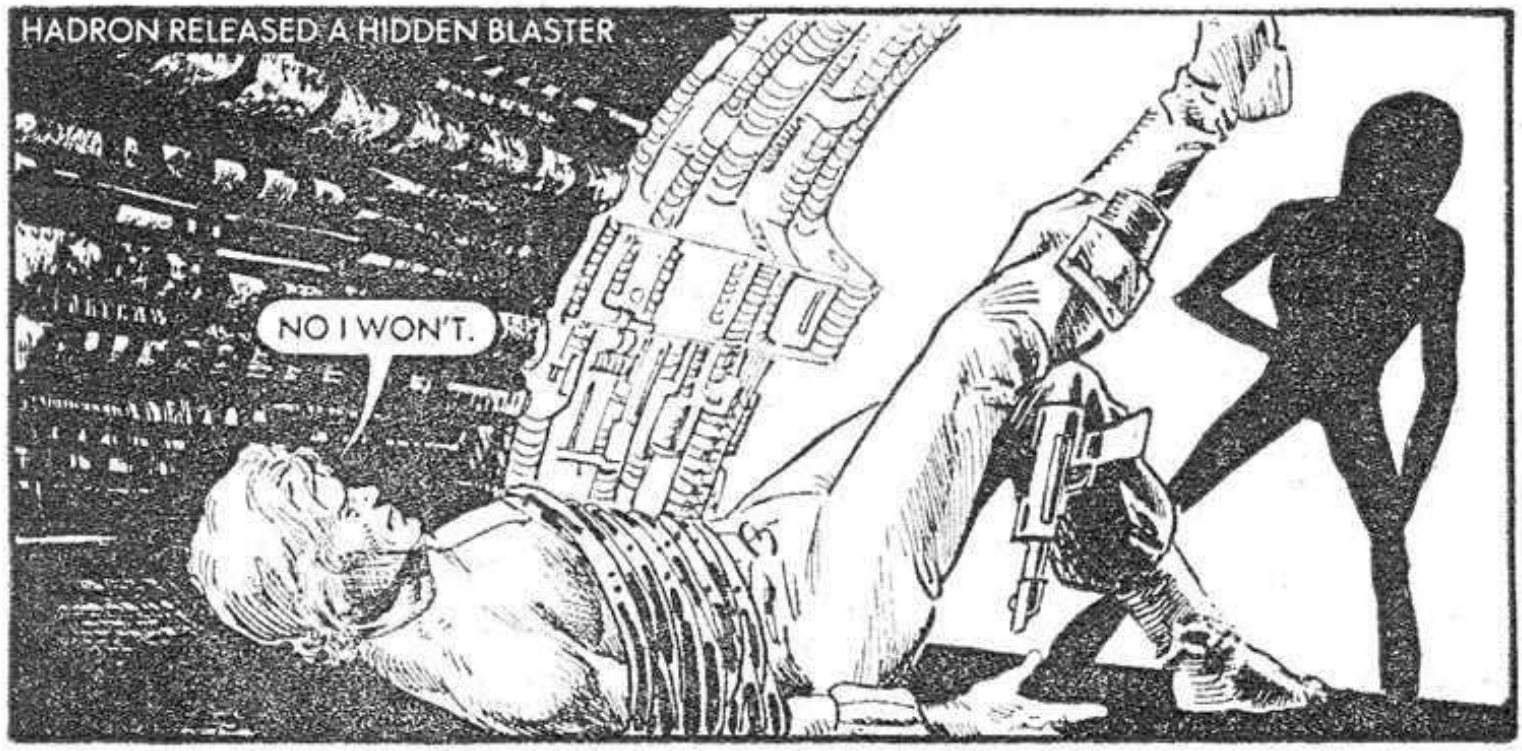

LET'S HOPE THAT'S A LIFE LINE!

JUPE!

WHAT HAVE I LET MYSELF IN FOR?

BY SATURN . . . WHAT . . ?
I AM ACHOS. HALF A MILLENIA AGO I DESTROYED A MILLION OF YOUR PEOPLE BECAUSE ONE MEMBER OF YOUR RACE DISPLEASED ME. THE GUARDIANS, ROT THEIR SOULS, TRIED AND CONVICTED ME. AS THEY DO NOT TAKE LIFE I WAS IMPRISONED IN THIS TERROR TOMB.
THE ALIEN SPOKE TERRAN IN AN EVIL GUTTURAL WAY.


YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE POWER TO ESCAPE MY ETERNAL IMPRISONMENT. FIRST YOU WILL TELL ME WHAT FORCES YOU HAVE HERE.

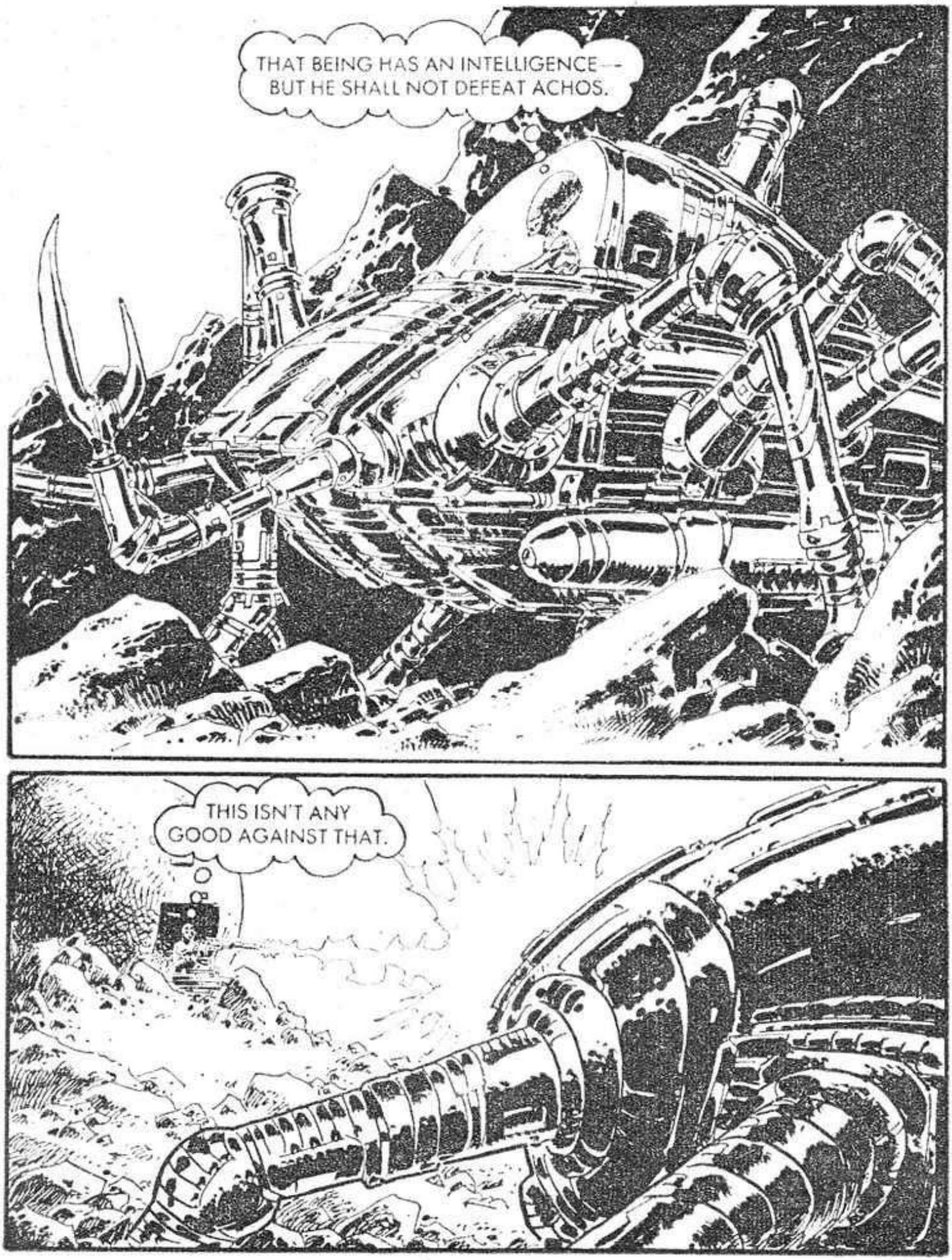

HADRON RELEASED A HIDDEN BLASTER
NO I WON'T.

. . . AND FIRED.
MY FINGERS FREEZE!
HADRON ESCAPED BEFORE ACHOS HAD A CHANCE TO RETALIATE.
I'VE GOT TO GAIN TIME TO FREE MY ARMS.

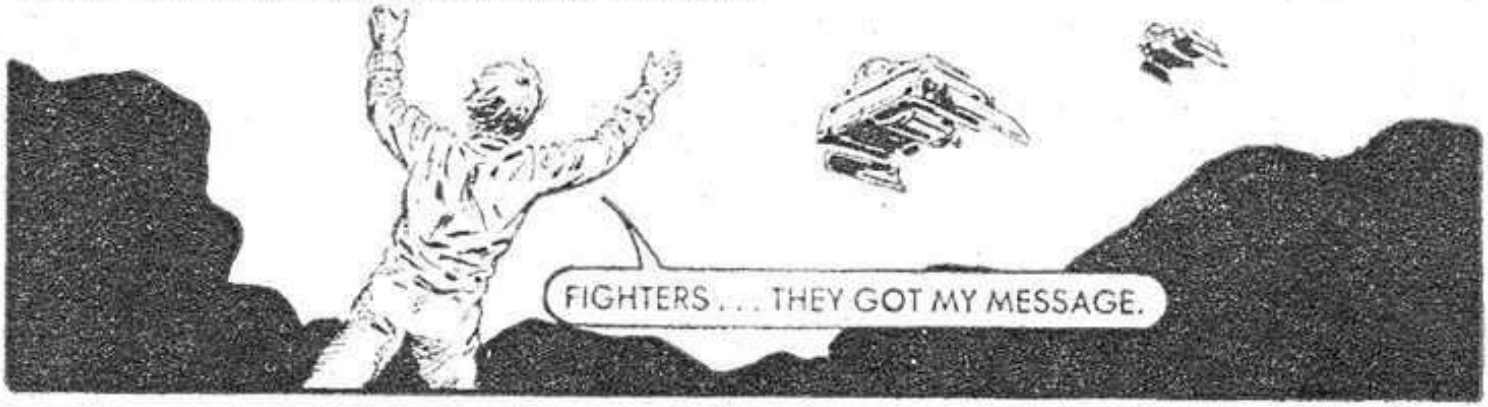
THAT BEING WILL DIE FOR DARING TO DEFY ME.

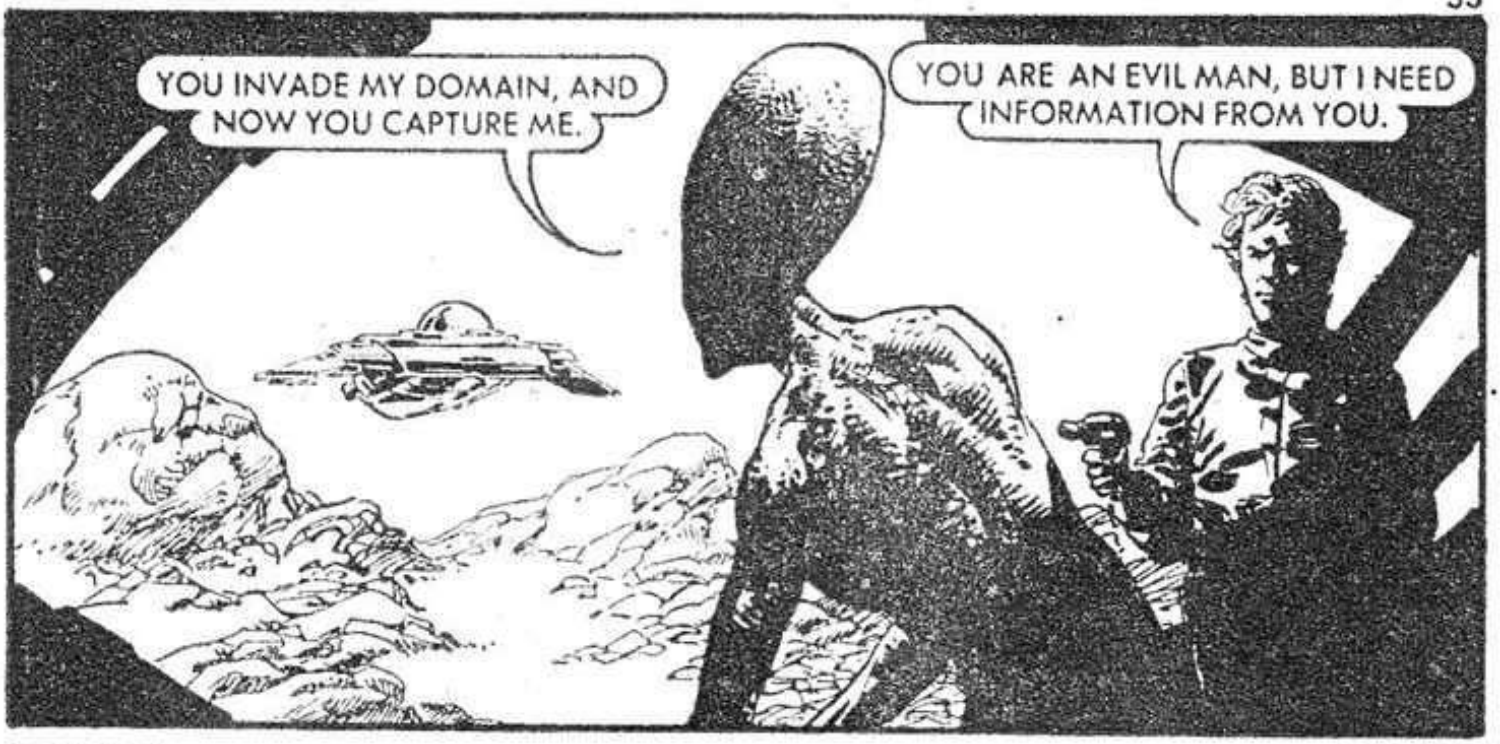
ACHOS BROUGHT TO LIFE FIGHTING MACHINES WHICH HAD LAIN DORMANT WITH HIM.

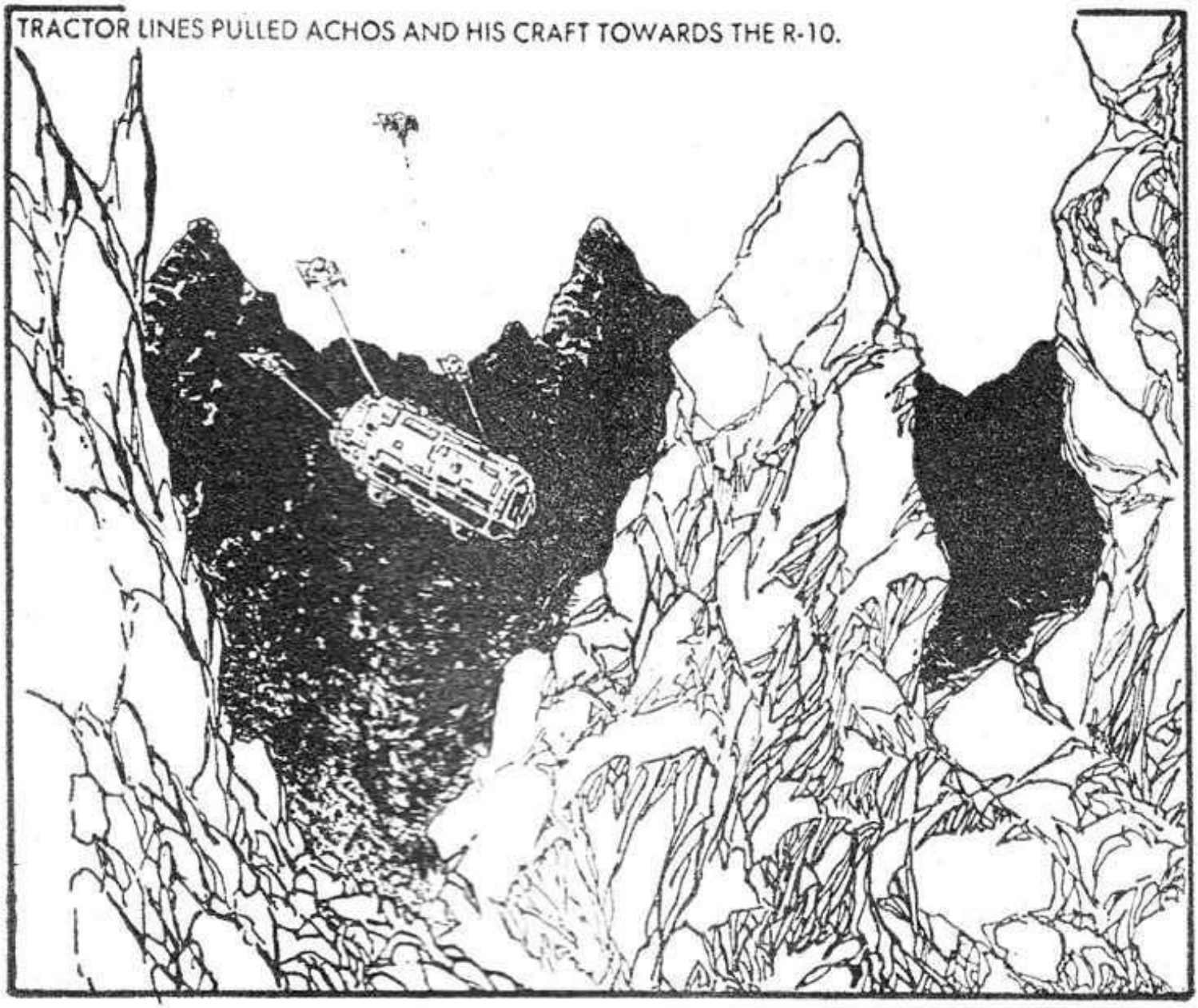
MY BLASTER HAS NO EFFECT. MY ONLY HOPE IS THE HEAVY DUTY LASER-CUTTER!
GOT IT!
I'LL WIRE THIS INTO MY CIRCUITS AND GIVE THE DISTRESS BEACON A POWER BOOST!


THAT BEING HAS AN INTELLIGENCE-- BUT HE SHALL NOT DEFEAT ACHOS.
THIS ISN'T ANY GOOD AGAINST THAT.

. . . BUT BEFORE ACHOS COULD DO ANYTHING—



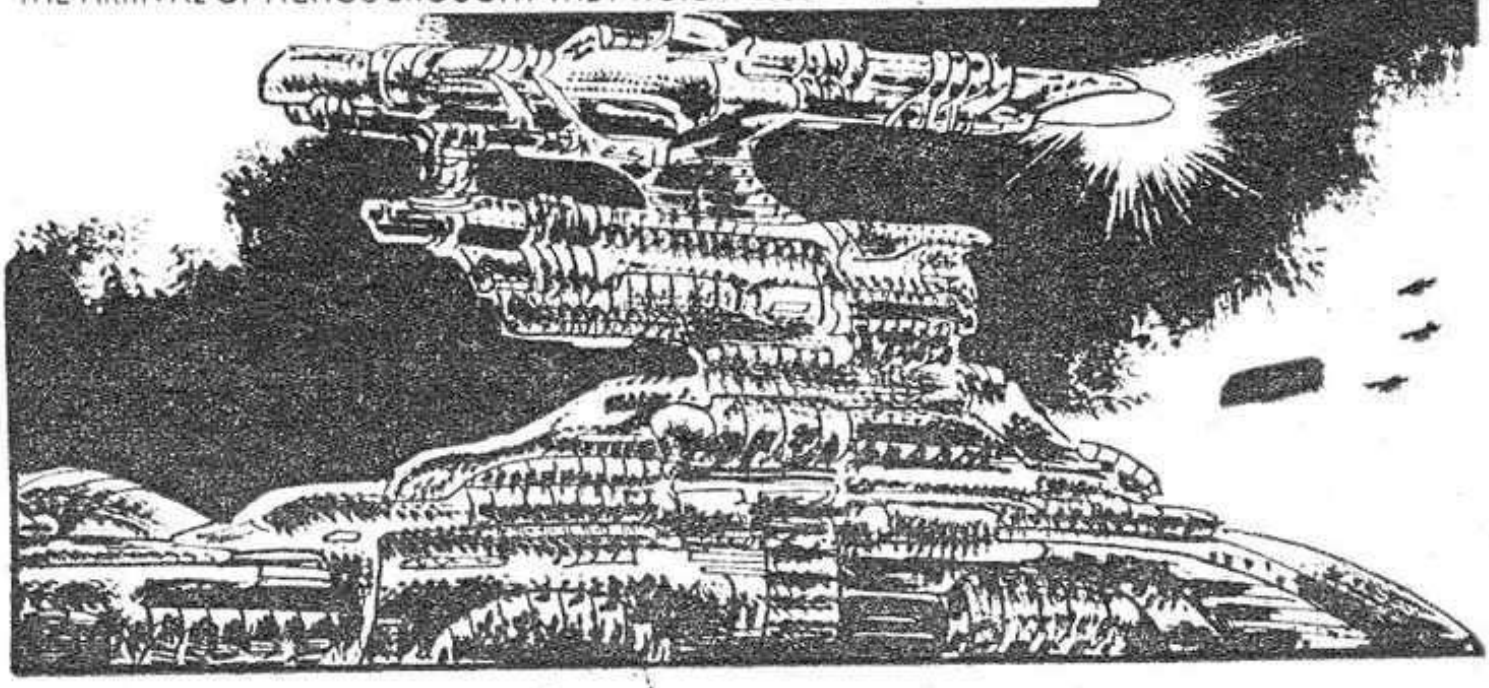

YOU INVADE MY DOMAIN, AND NOW YOU CAPTURE ME.
YOU ARE AN EVIL MAN, BUT I NEED INFORMATION FROM YOU.

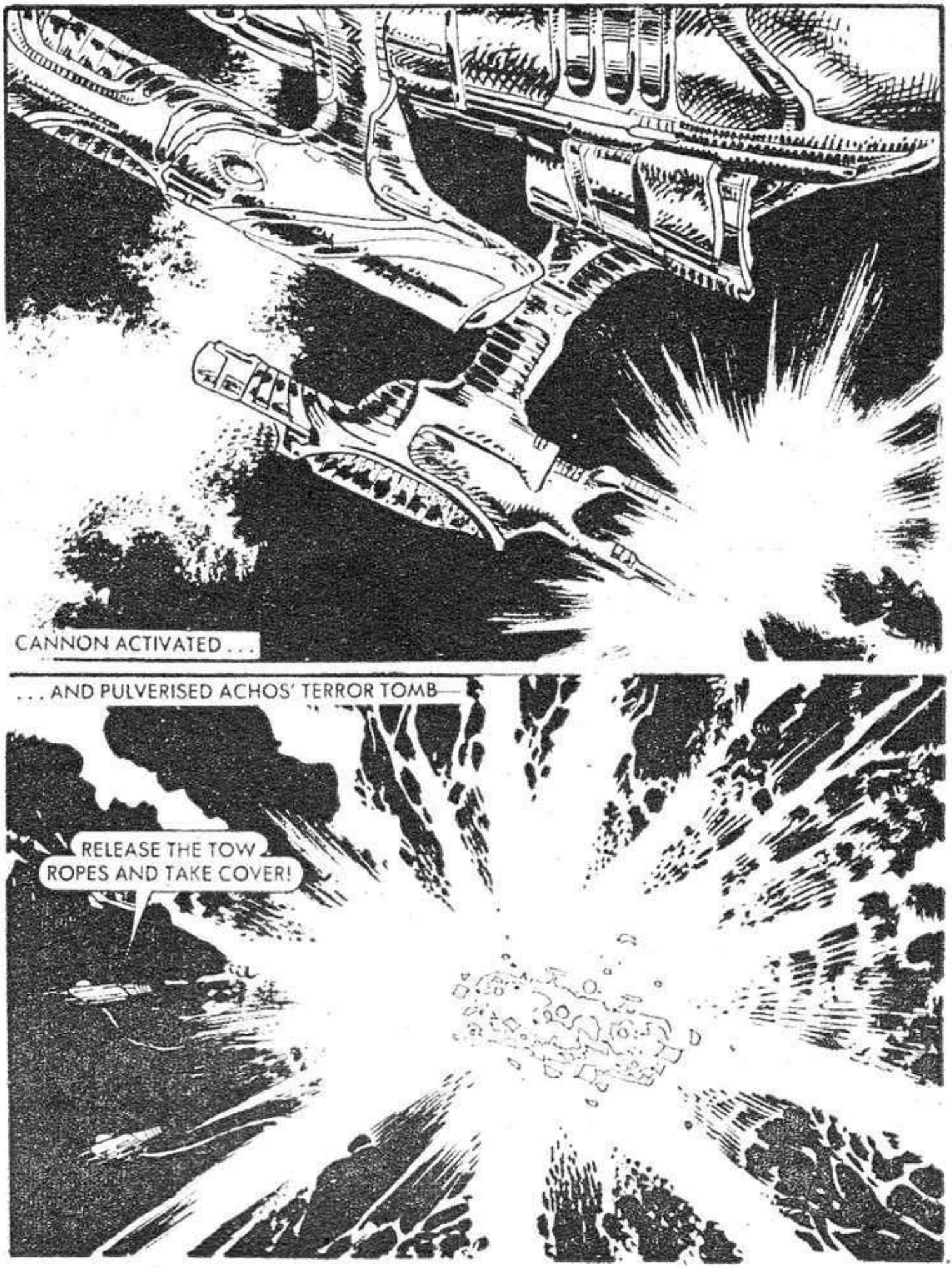

TRACTOR LINES PULLED ACHOS AND HIS CRAFT TOWARDS THE R-10.

YOU AND THAT SHIP ARE OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED. HOW?

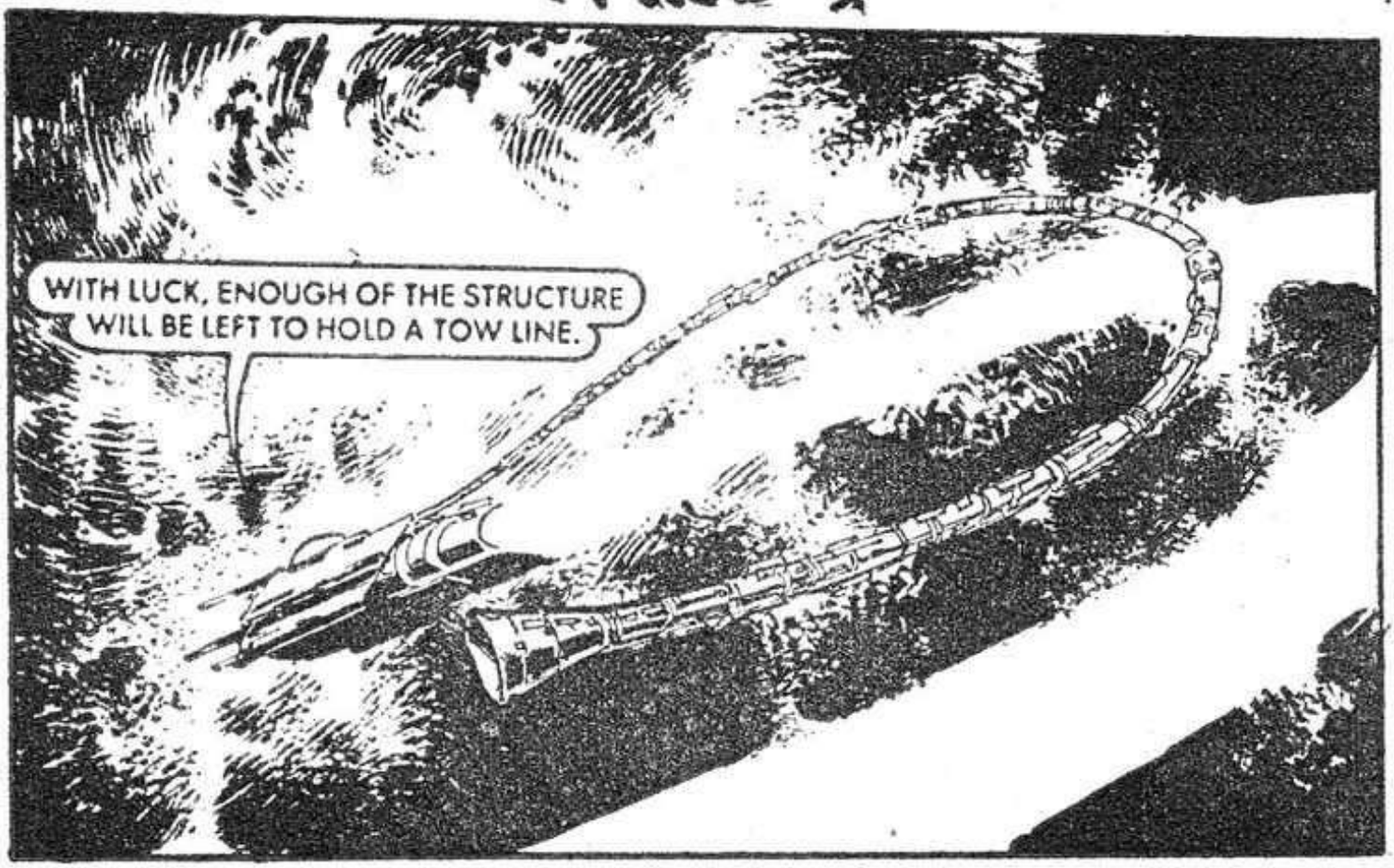
YOU WILL SOON DISCOVER ITS PURPOSE!

THE ARRIVAL OF ACHOS BROUGHT THE MYSTERY HULK SLOWLY TO LIFE.




CANNON ACTIVATED . . .
. . . AND PULVERISED ACHOS' TERROR TOMB—
RELEASE THE TOW ROPES AND TAKE COVER!

THERE'S ENOUGH OXYGEN INSIDE THAT WRECK TO CREATE A FIREBALL—AND IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE R-10!
THE R-10 STILL HAS VOLATILE VAPOUR IN ITS TANKS. IF I CAN'T STOP THAT FIREBALL THE WHOLE SHIP WILL BE DESTROYED!

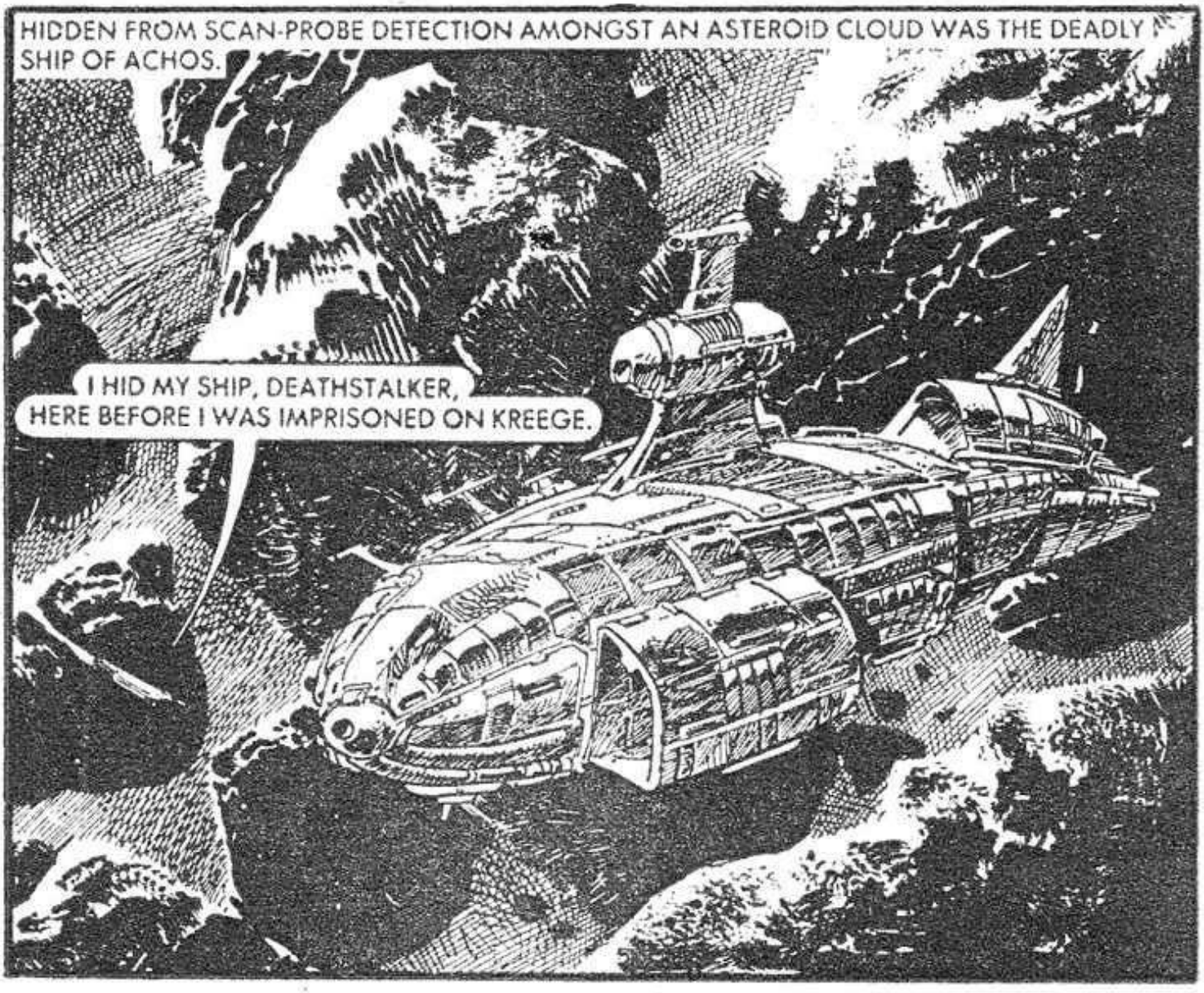

WITH LUCK, ENOUGH OF THE STRUCTURE WILL BE LEFT TO HOLD A TOW LINE.

AN ELECTRON ASSIMILATOR LINK BONDED THE TOW LINE TO THE WRECKAGE AT THE HEART OF THE FIREBALL.
IT'S SLOWLY HEADING AWAY FROM THE R-10 BUT THE LINE MUST BE ALMOST MELTED BY NOW!
R10
IT'S SWINGING CLEAR.
WE'LL RUN SAFETY CHECKS ON THE WHOLE SHIP JUST TO BE CERTAIN.

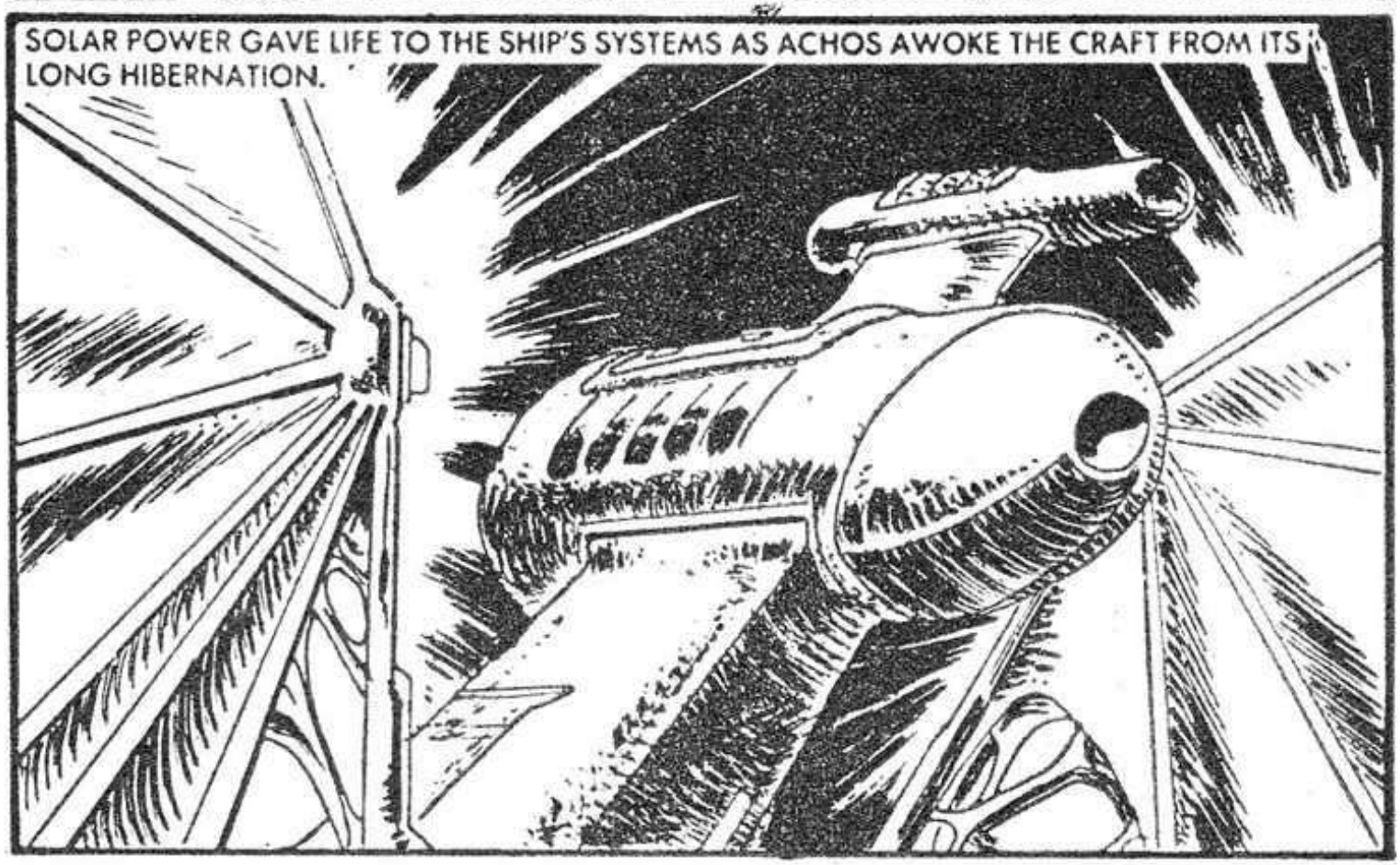
AT THE MOMENT OF TRIUMPH, THE TOW LINE MELTED AND BROKE. HADRON, WITH HIS DRIVE STILL AT MAXIMUM THRUST, ACCELERATED OUT OF CONTROL INTO UNKNOWN SPACE.
YOU SHOULD HAVE CONCENTRATED ON ME INSTEAD OF THE FIREBALL, FOR I AM THE MORE DANGEROUS!

YOU NEED TO BE KEPT QUIET.
THE EARTHMEN WERE TOO STUPID TO REALISE THAT THE ORBITING HULK WAS A WARNING ABOUT ME, ACHOS. THAT IS WHY IT FIRED ON THE TERROR TOMB. IT WAS A GUARDIAN VESSEL PROGRAMMED TO PREVENT MY ESCAPE.

ACHOS SOON GOT THE FLYER UNDER HIS CONTROL AND ON COURSE FOR A STRANGE SECTOR OF SPACE.
EARTHLING—YOU HAVE UNFROZEN JUST IN TIME TO SEE YOUR NEW HOME.


HIDDEN FROM SCAN-PROBE DETECTION AMONGST AN ASTEROID CLOUD WAS THE DEADLY SHIP OF ACHOS.
I HID MY SHIP, DEATHSTALKER, HERE BEFORE I WAS IMPRISONED ON KREEGE.

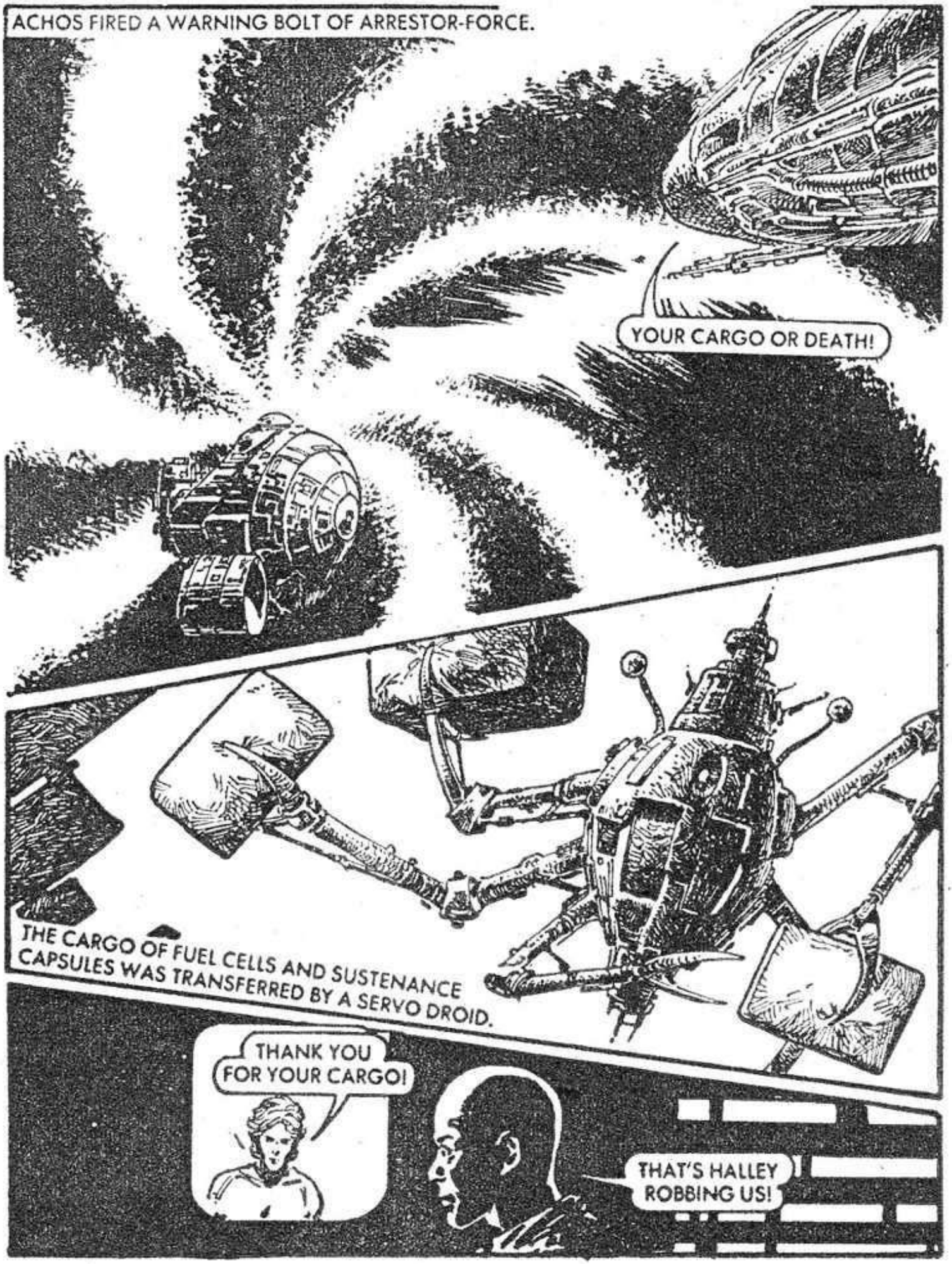
ACHOS TRANSFERRED TO HIS SHIP.
I KNEW I WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY AGAIN.

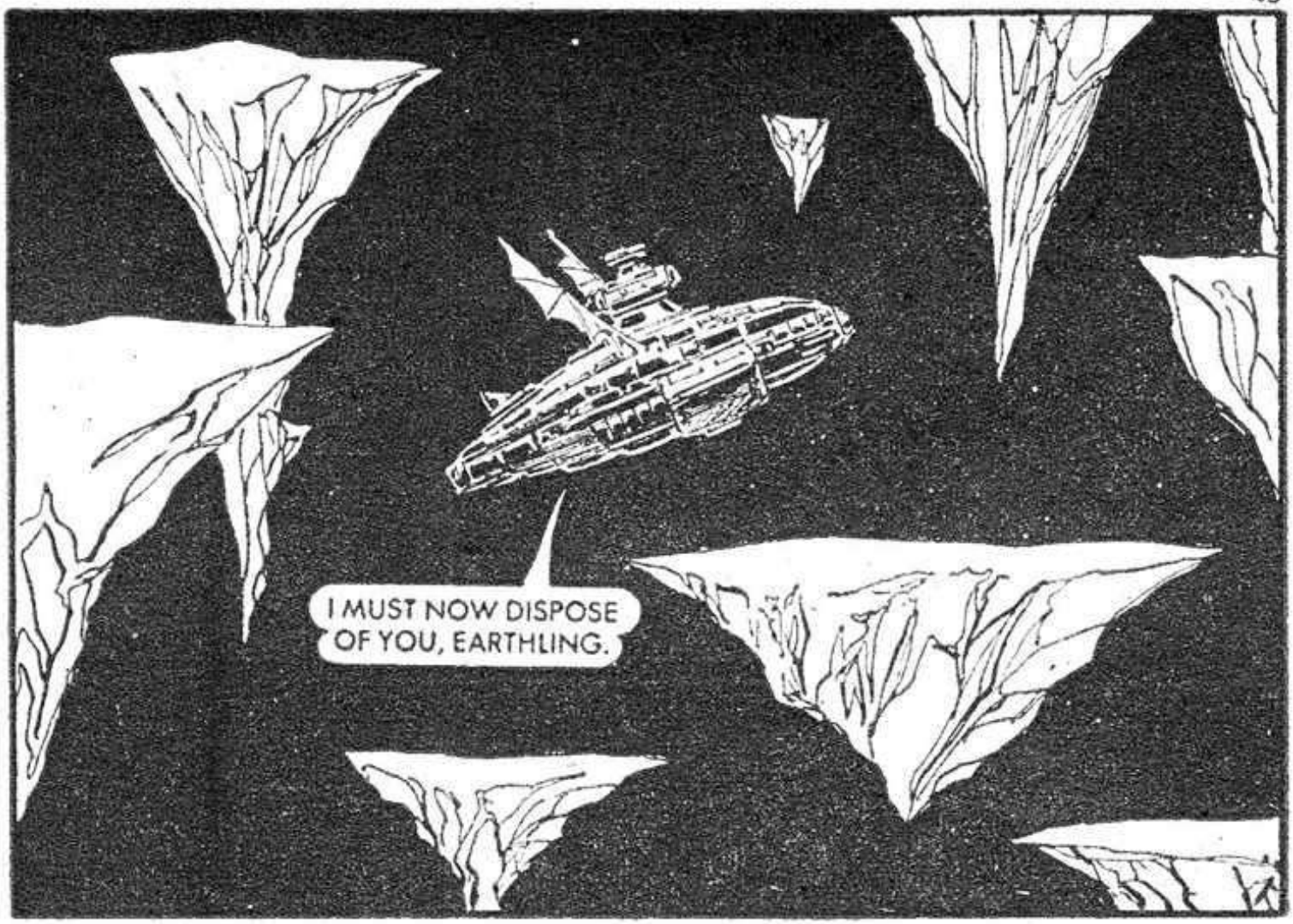

SOLAR POWER GAVE LIFE TO THE SHIP'S SYSTEMS AS ACHOS AWOKE THE CRAFT FROM ITS LONG HIBERNATION.

BEFORE I DISPOSE OF YOU, I NEED A LITTLE INFORMATION.
!

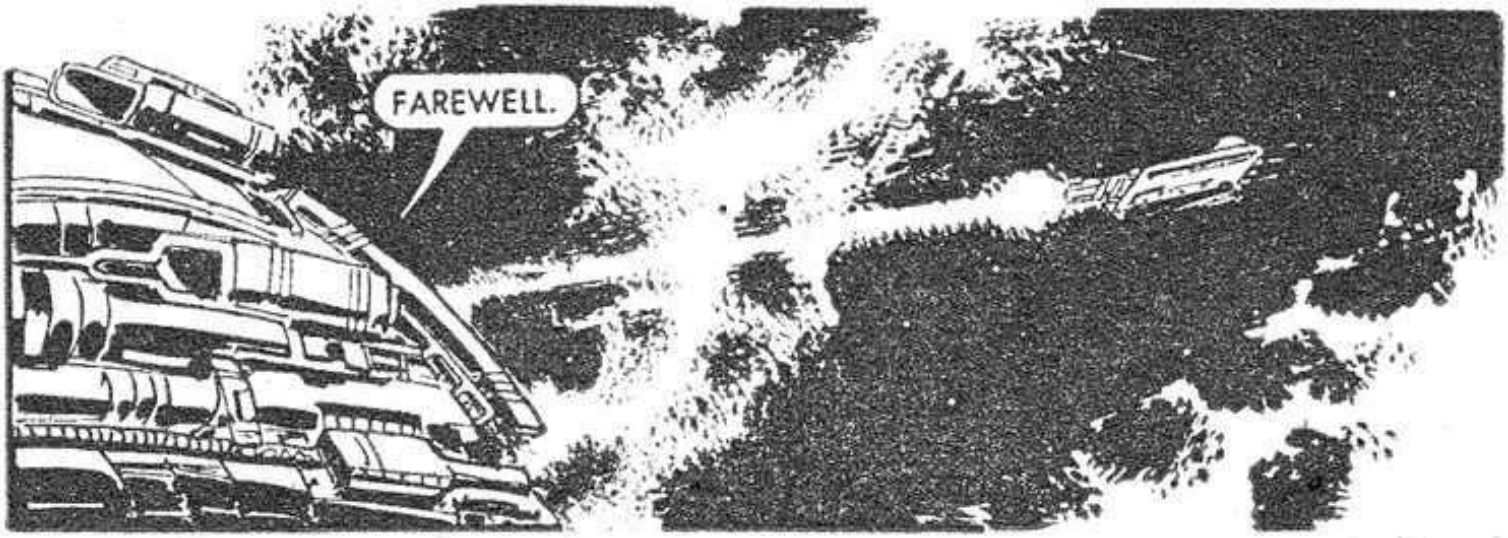
ACHOS PROBED HADRON'S BRAIN WITH A TELEPATHIC FORCE AURA..
THE-VENCETI-FREIGHT-ROUTES-ARE-UNDEFENDED-UNTIL-THE-BASE-IS-ESTABLISHED-ON-KREEGE.

POWER BUILD UP IS COMPLETED! MY SOLAR-JUMP-DRIVE NOW CARRIES ME TO VENCETI!
ACHOS SOON FOUND A DEFENCELESS PRIZE.

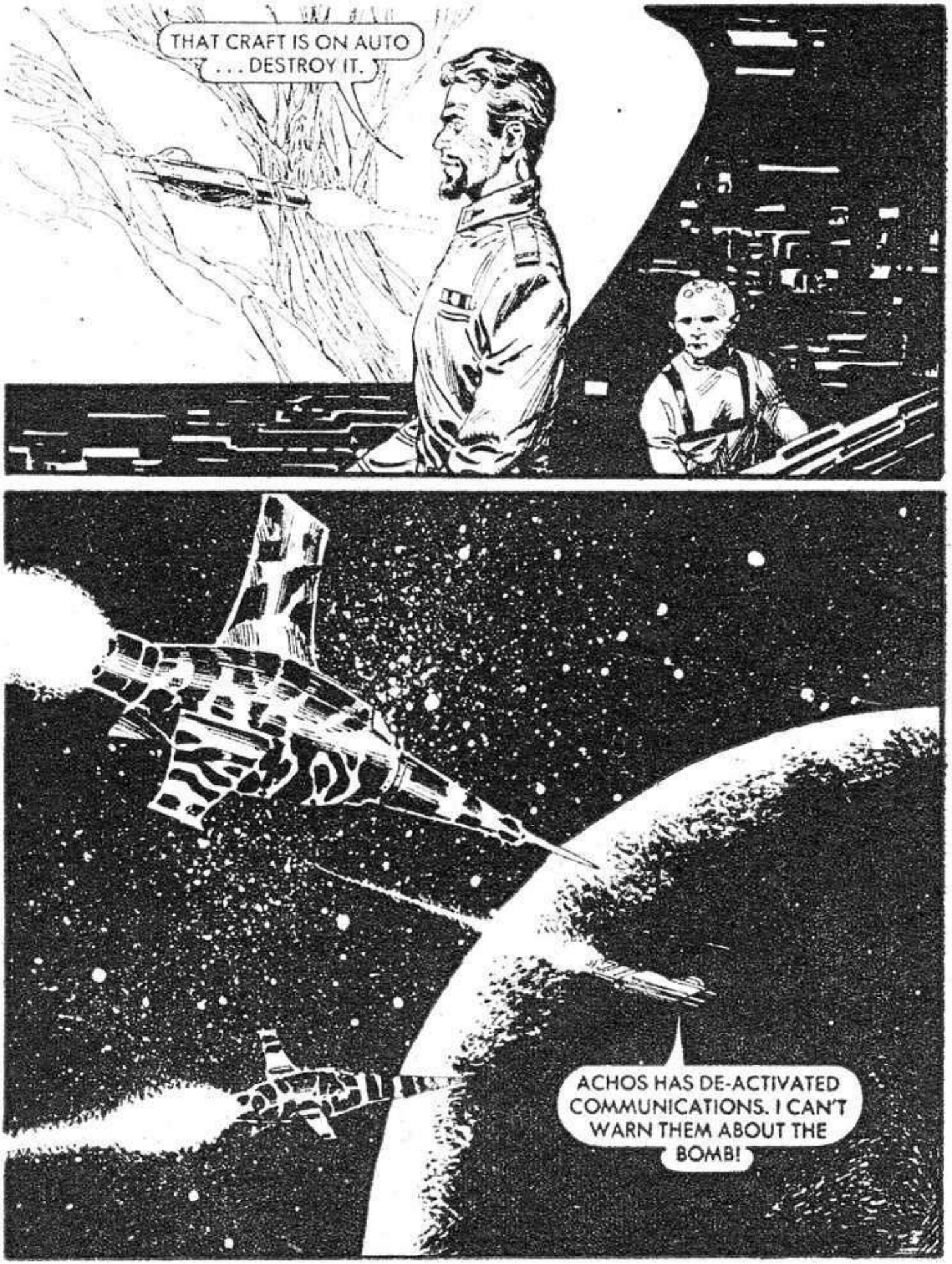

ACHOS FIRED A WARNING BOLT OF ARRESTOR-FORCE.
YOUR CARGO OR DEATH!
THE CARGO OF FUEL CELLS AND SUSTENANCE CAPSULES WAS TRANSFERRED BY A SERVO DROID.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CARGO!
THAT'S HALLEY ROBBING US!


I MUST NOW DISPOSE OF YOU, EARTHLING.

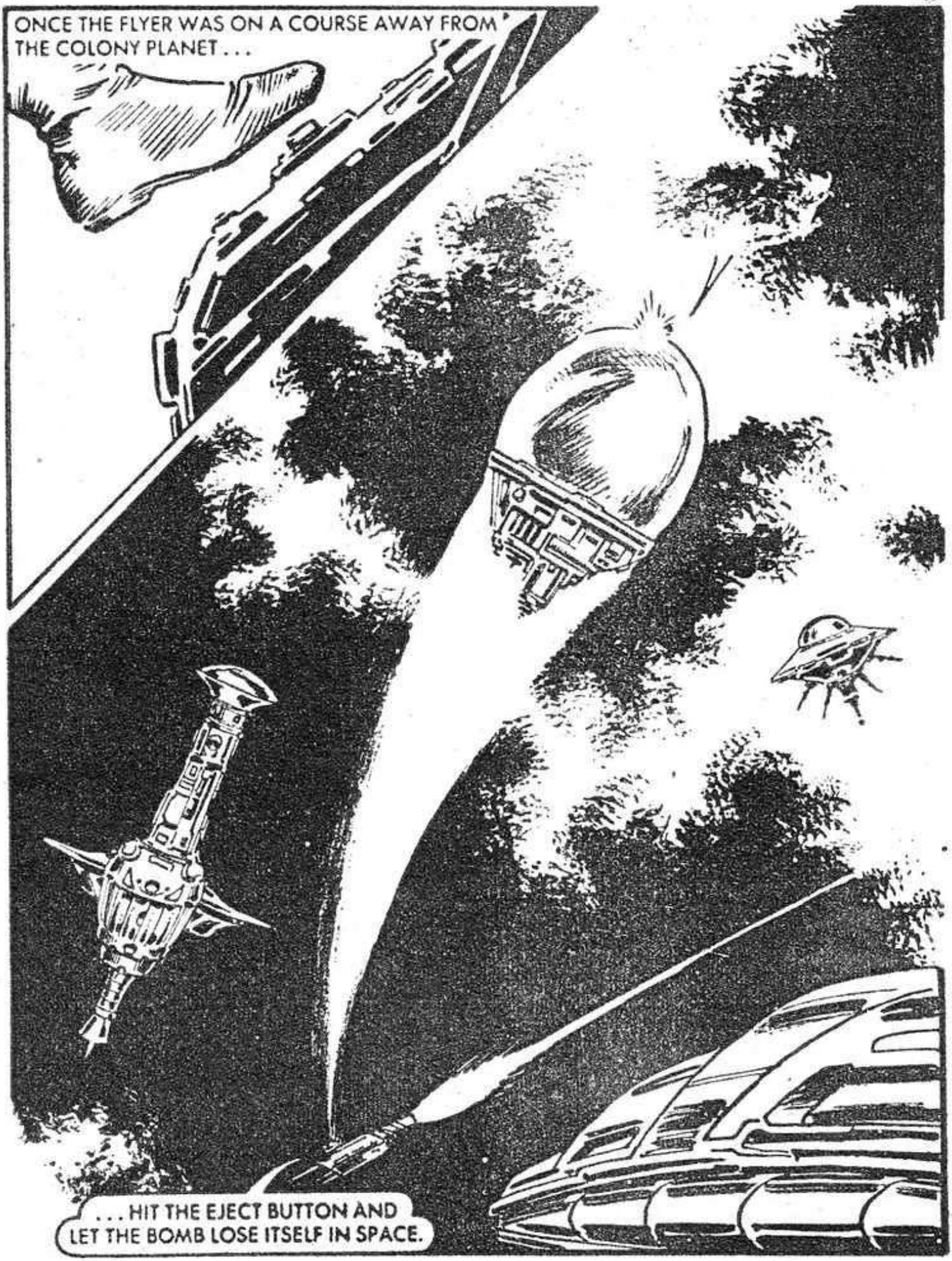
YOUR SHIP WILL TAKE DEATH TO YOUR PEOPLE. CONTAINED WITHIN IS A BACTERIAL BOMB . . . YOU SHALL ALL DIE.

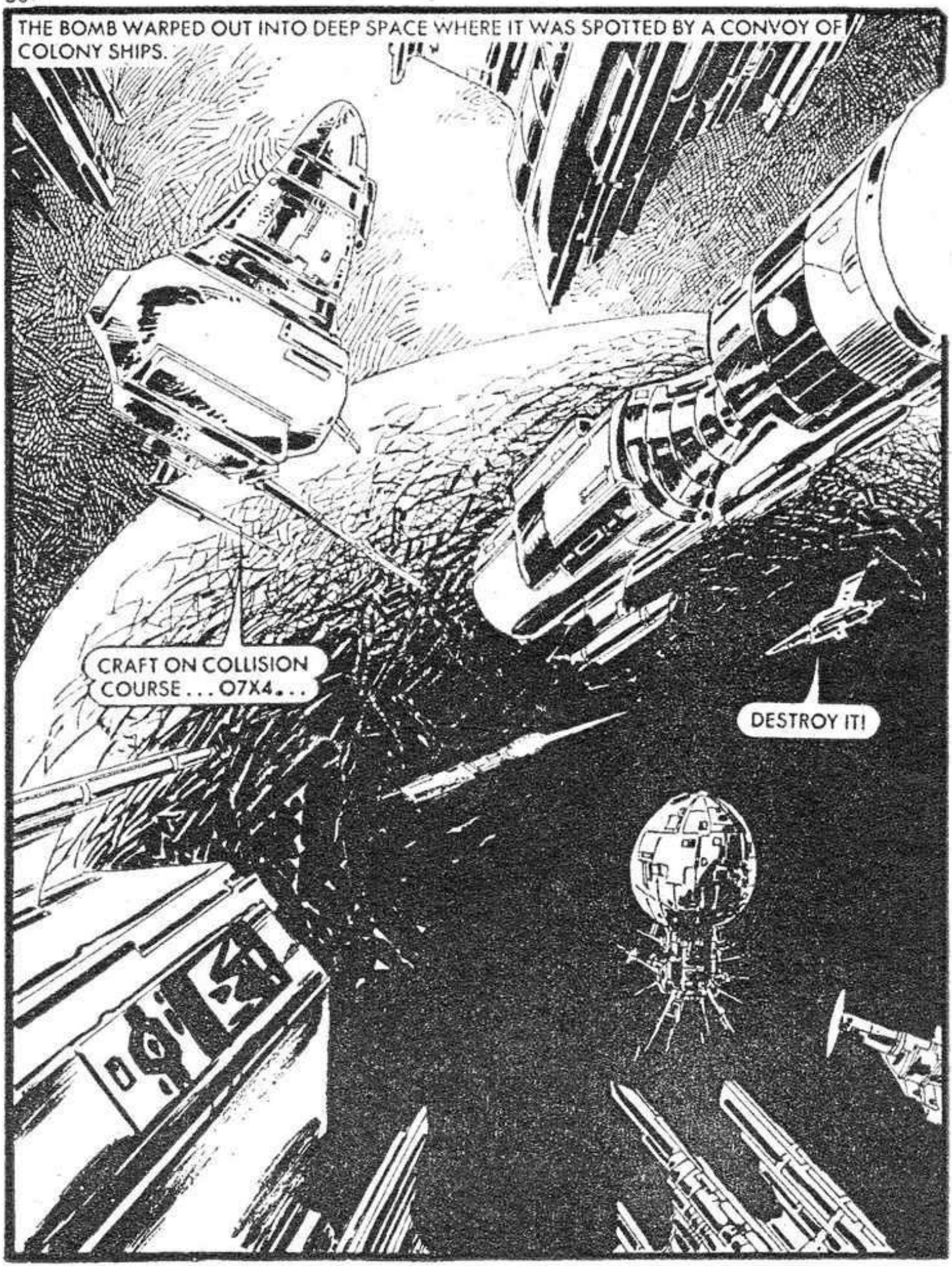

FAREWELL.

HADRON HEADED ON A PRE-SET COURSE TOWARDS ONE OF THE COLONIST HOME WORLDS.
THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE ONCE I HIT ATMOSPHERE, AND I'M HELPLESS TO STOP IT!
GALAC-SQUAD FLEET WERE SEARCHING FOR HADRON.
WE'RE PICKING UP A TRACE. CRAFT HEADING FOR COLONY WORLD.

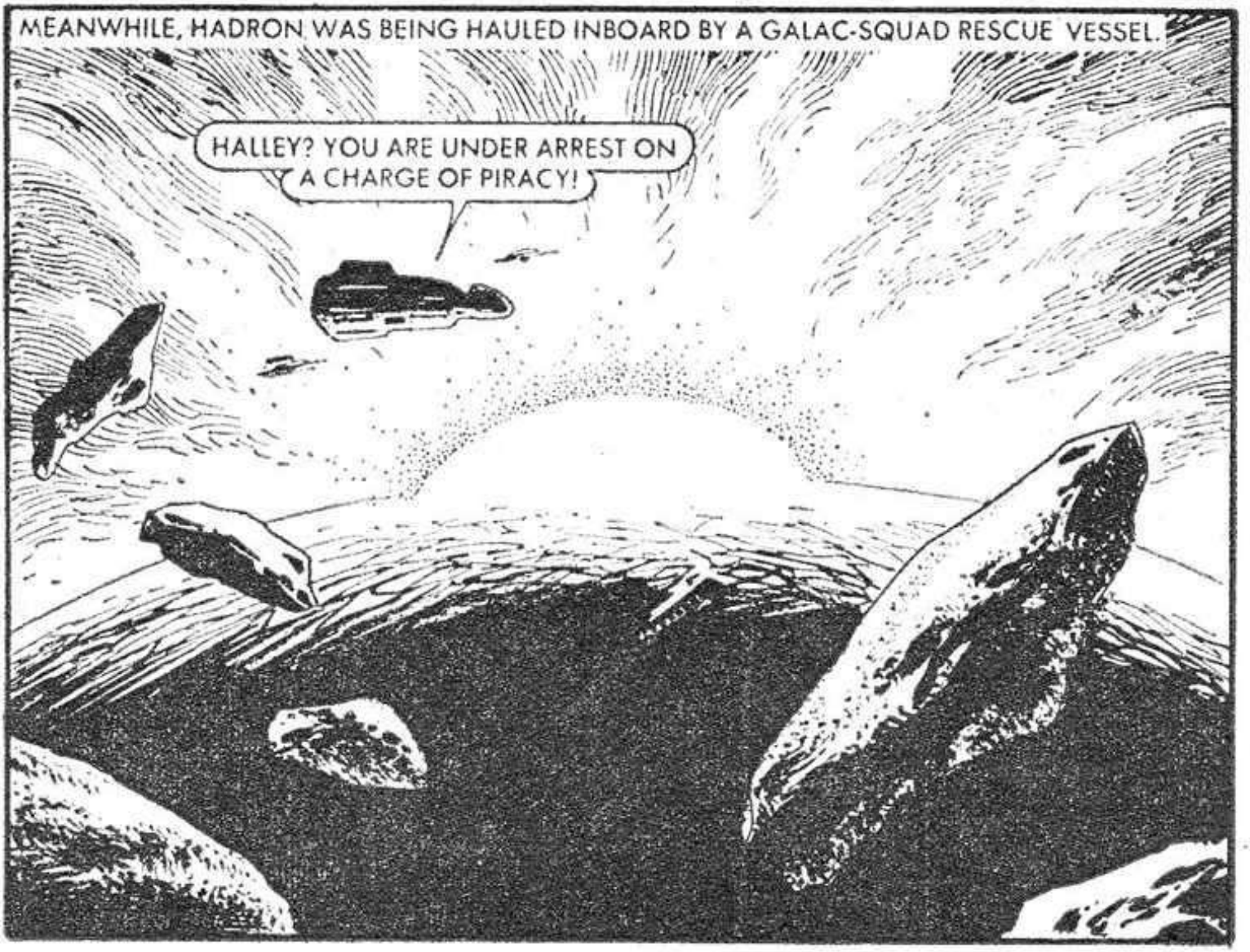

THAT CRAFT IS ON AUTO . . . DESTROY IT.
ACHOS HAS DE-ACTIVATED COMMUNICATIONS. I CAN'T WARN THEM ABOUT THE BOMB!

AS THE CRAFT ENTERED THE AUTO-LANDING PROGRAMME THE GRAVITY COUCH ALTERED POSITION.
MY ANKLE BONDS ARE WEAKER—I CAN BREAK FREE.
DONE IT! I HOPE I CAN FLY WITH MY FEET!
MY HEAVY DUTY BOOTS MAKE FINE ADJUSTMENTS IMPOSSIBLE!


ONCE THE FLYER WAS ON A COURSE AWAY FROM THE COLONY PLANET . . .
. . . HIT THE EJECT BUTTON AND LET THE BOMB LOSE ITSELF IN SPACE.

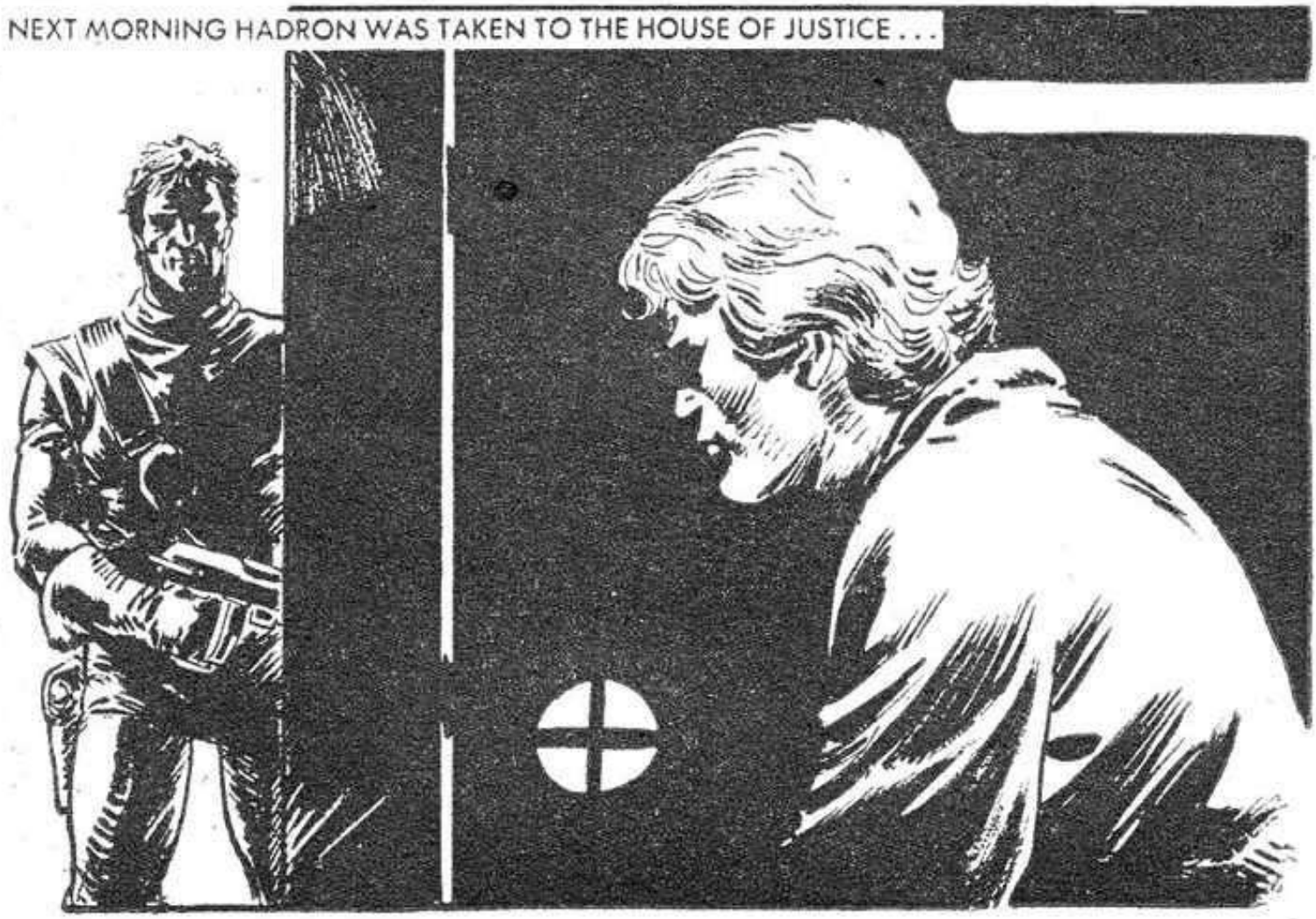

THE BOMB WARPED OUT INTO DEEP SPACE WHERE IT WAS SPOTTED BY A CONVOY OF COLONY SHIPS.
CRAFT ON COLLISION COURSE . . . O7X4. . .
DESTROY IT!

THE CONVOY ESCORT DESTROYED ACHOS' BOMB IN THE SAFETY OF DEEP SPACE.


MEANWHILE, HADRON WAS BEING HAULED INBOARD BY A GALAC-SQUAD RESCUE VESSEL.
HALLEY? YOU ARE UNDER ARREST ON A CHARGE OF PIRACY!

B-BUT ACHOS AND THE DEATHSTALKER ARE FREE.
PRISON'S THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOU! THE WHOLE PLANET IS AFTER YOUR BLOOD!
BUT WHY?

YOU WERE IN A SHIP THAT HAS ATTACKED FREIGHTERS . . .
ACHOS! HE'S USING VIDPRINTS OF ME TO CONFUSE GALAC-SQUAD.


NEXT MORNING HADRON WAS TAKEN TO THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE . . .

PIRACY IS STILL WORTH DEATH. THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE FOR ME . . .
SUDDENLY—
WHAT THE . . . AN ANTI-GRAV GRENADE.
I DAREN'T SHOOT OR THE RECOIL WILL SEND ME SPINNING.

DISGUISED FI-SCI MEN WEARING GRAVITY BOOTS BROKE INTO THE CAGE—
A QUICK SHOT WILL STOP YOU STRUGGLING, HADRON!
WHEN THE EFFECT OF THE ANTI-GRAV GRENADE FADED, THE PRISONER WAS GONE.
THIS ACT MEANS MARTIAL LAW! WE WILL SEARCH EVERY ASTEROID UNTIL THE PIRATE IS FOUND!
W-WHERE AM I?

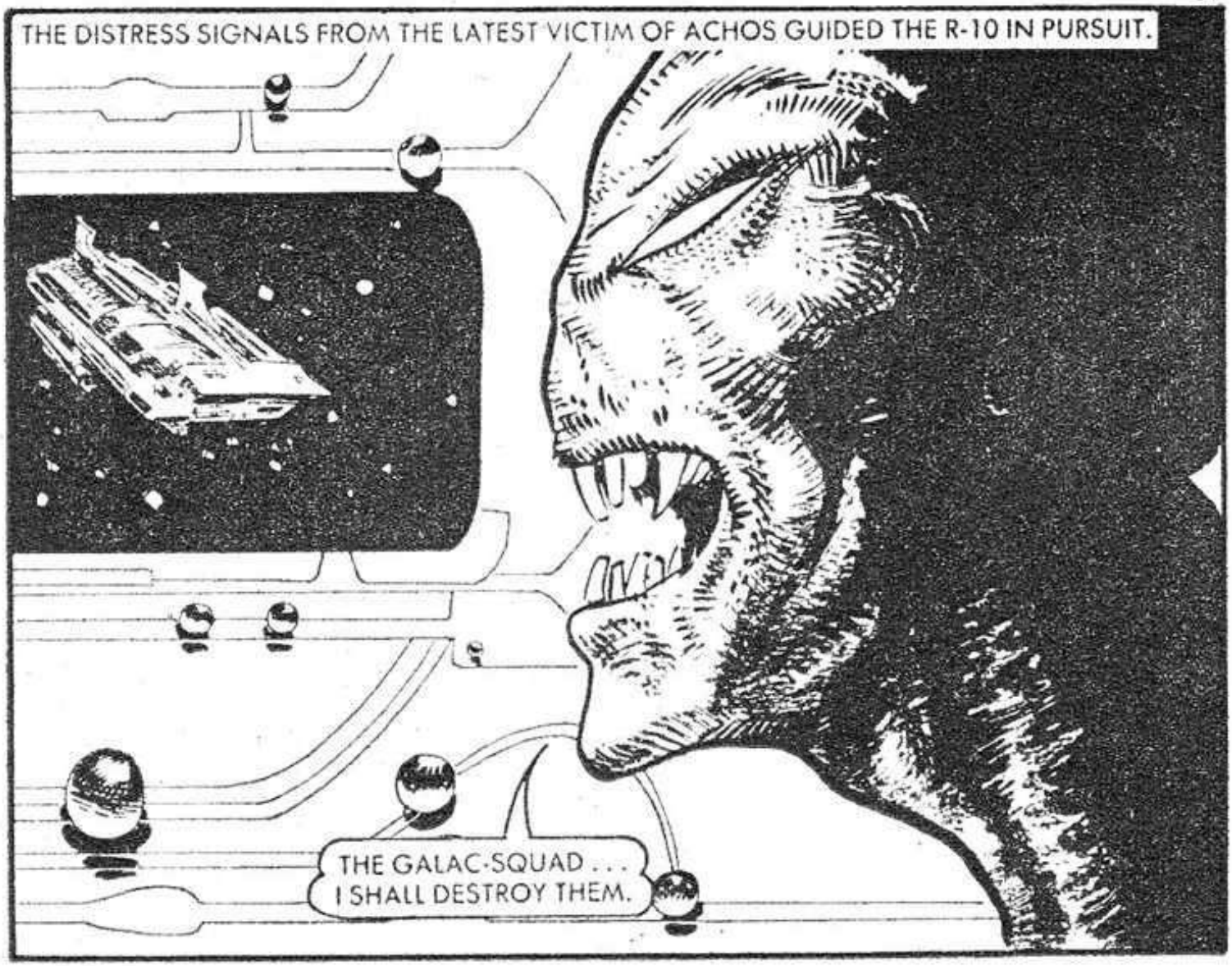
YOU'RE ON BOARD THE R-10! SORRY IT GOT ROUGH BACK THERE BUT WE DIDN'T WANT YOU GIVING US AWAY.

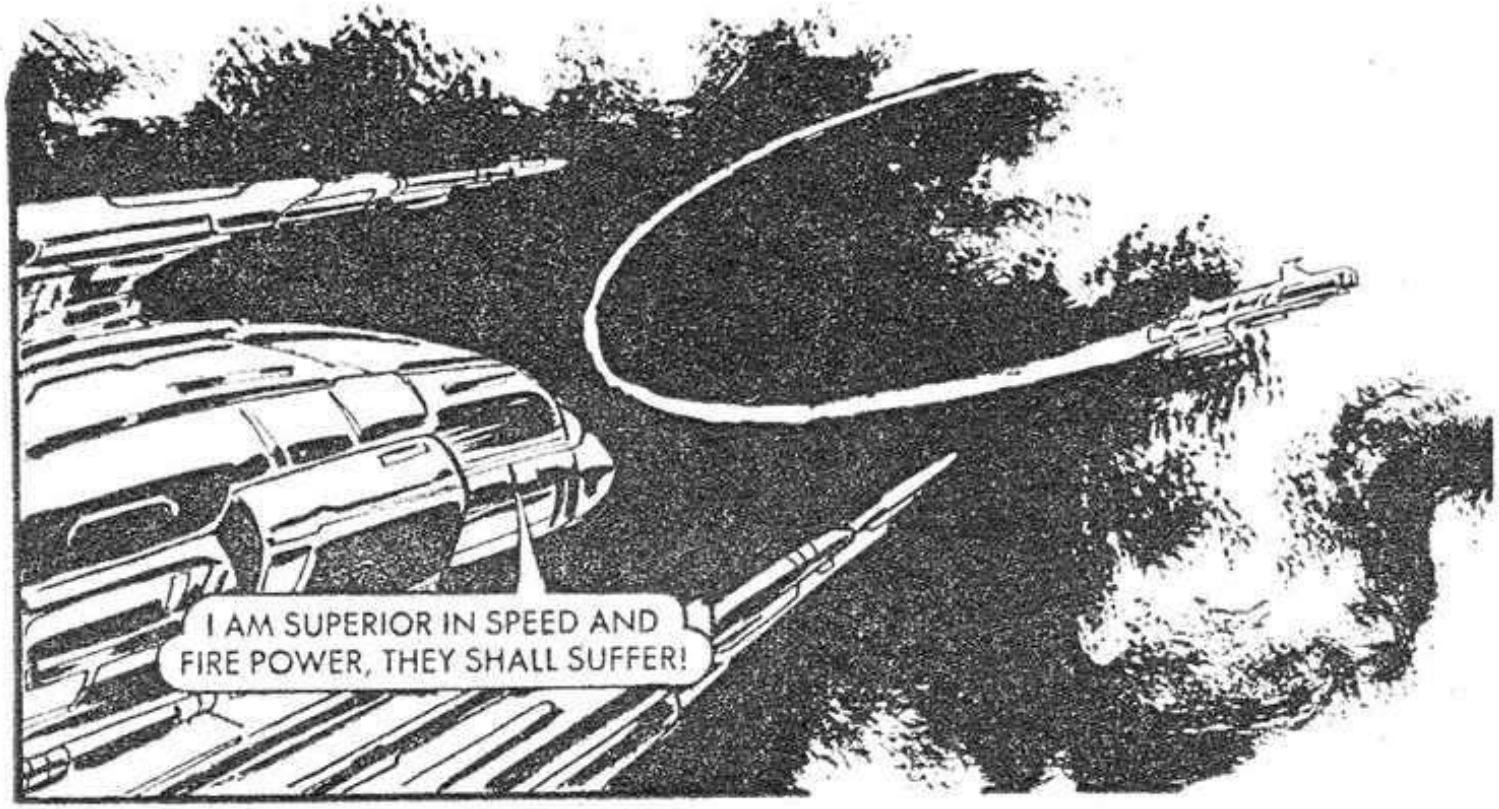
WE GOT AWAY BEFORE THEY REALISED WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
YES! THAT'S WHY WE WANTED THEM TO THINK WE WERE PIRATES. THEY'LL SEARCH NEARBY FOR US WHILE WE TACKLE ACHOS.

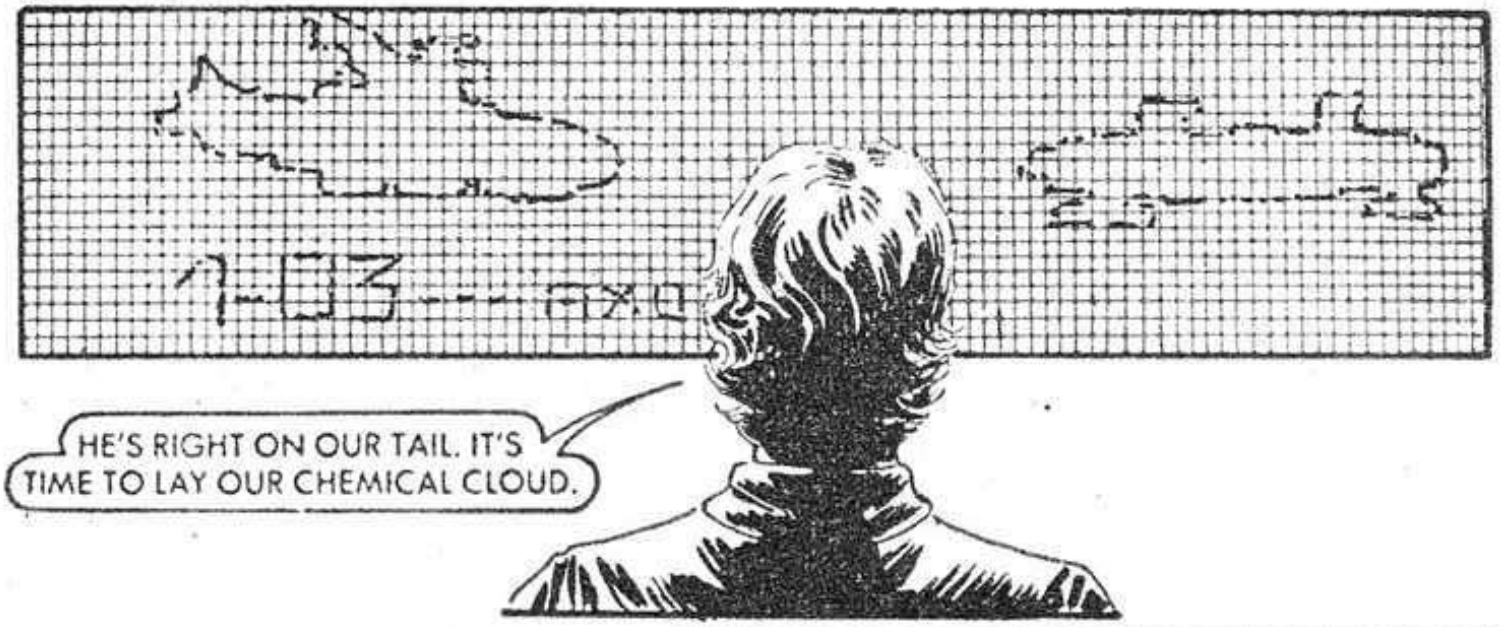
YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
WE THINK SO—WE DECODED THAT MESSAGE. IT WAS A WARNING FROM THE GUARDIANS. IT ALSO GAVE DETAILS OF THE ORIGIN OF ACHOS.

WITH A COURSE SET FOR ACHOS' HOME SYSTEM, HADRON PLANNED.
I WANT A LIST OF CHEMICALS, BACTERIA AND SO ON IN OUR TANKS. I THINK I KNOW THE ONE WAY TO DEFEAT ACHOS.
STRAP IN FOR WARP JUMP.
MEANWHILE, AT GALAC-SQUAD BASE—
GENERAL LARZ, SIR, MONITORS SHOW THE R-10 HAS MADE AN UNAUTHORISED JUMP INTO WARP-SPACE!
GET A FIX AND WE'LL FOLLOW!

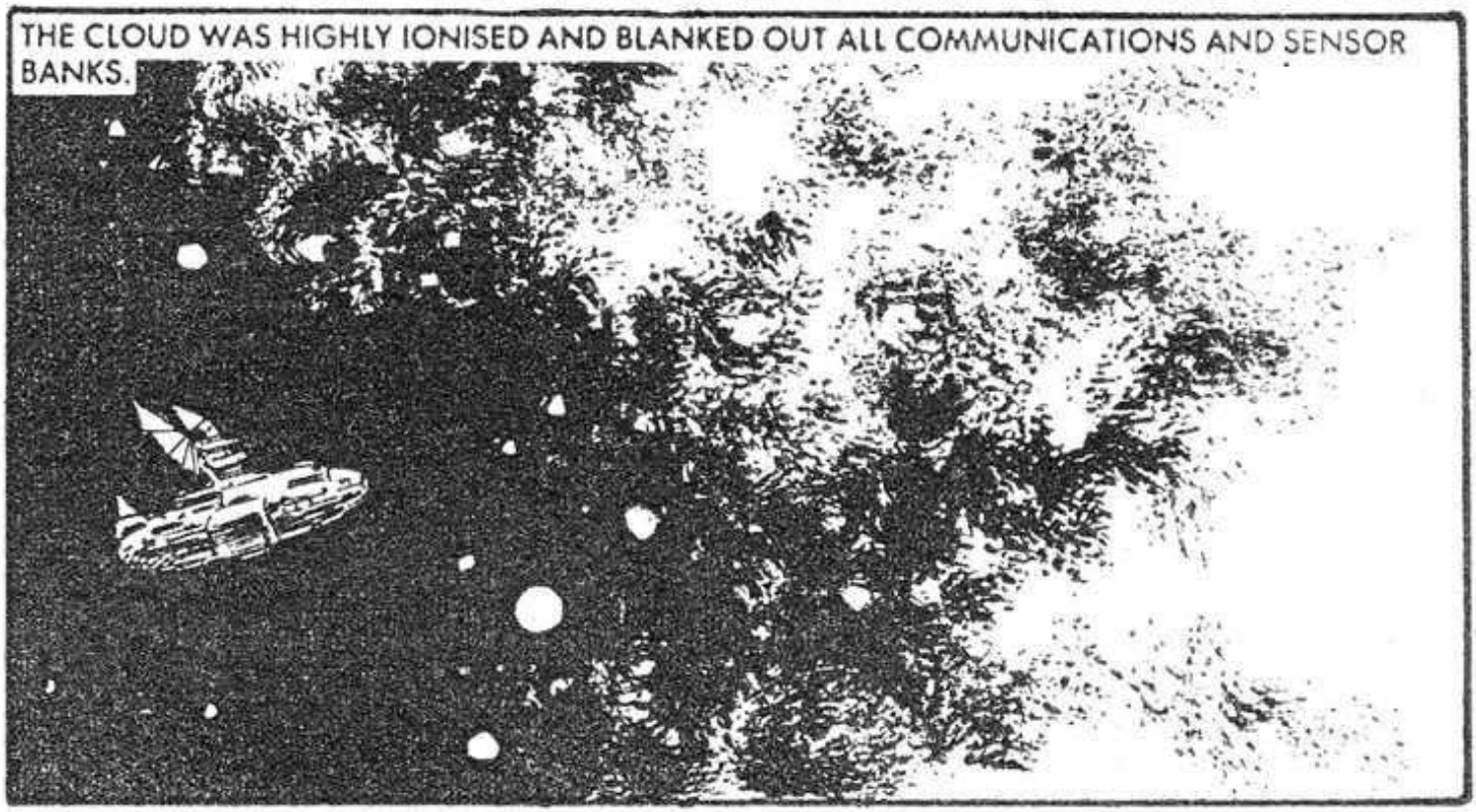
MEANWHILE ACHOS WAS ON THE RAMPAGE.


THE DISTRESS SIGNALS FROM THE LATEST VICTIM OF ACHOS GUIDED THE R-10 IN PURSUIT.
THE GALAC-SQUAD . . . I SHALL DESTROY THEM.


I AM SUPERIOR IN SPEED AND FIRE POWER, THEY SHALL SUFFER!

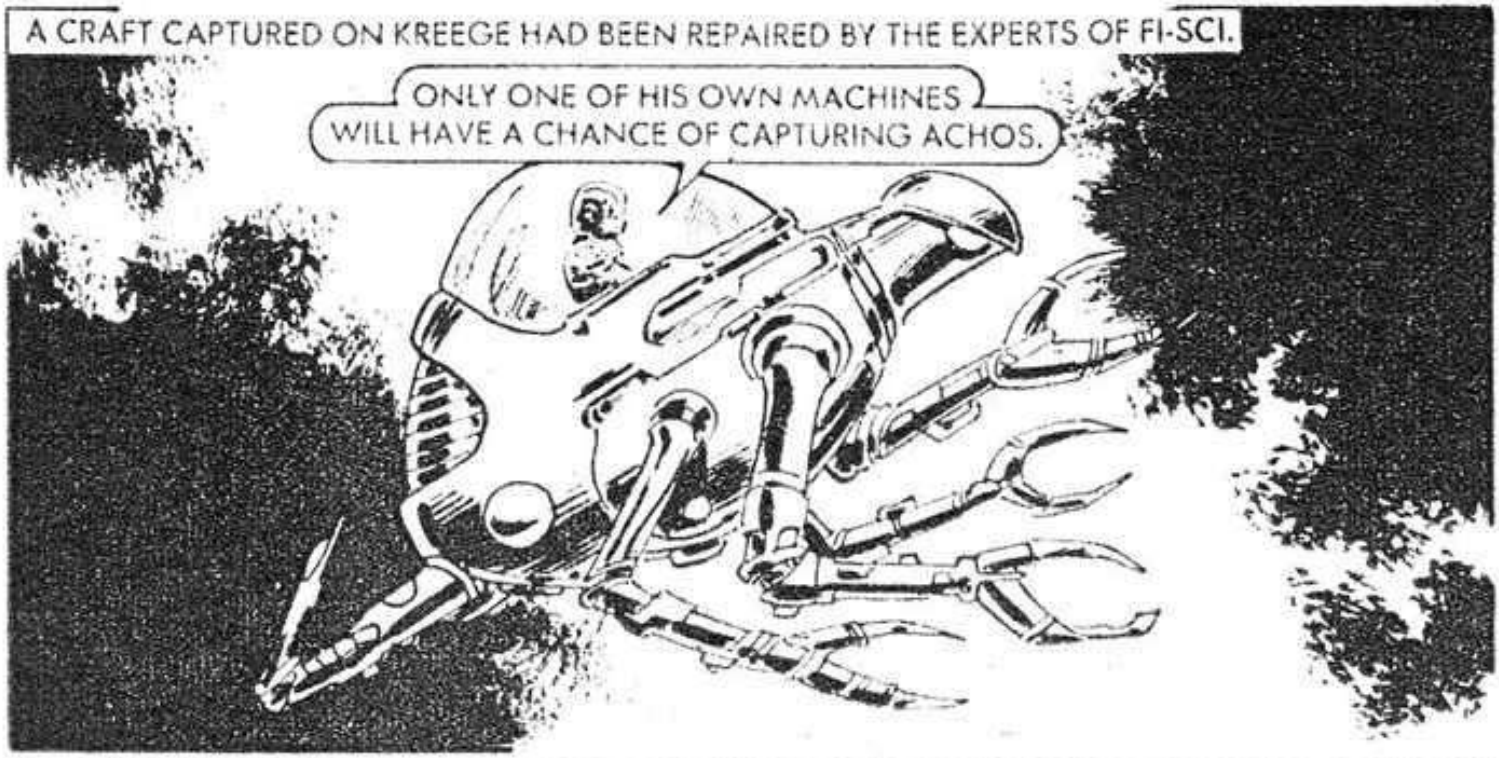

HE'S RIGHT ON OUR TAIL. IT'S TIME TO LAY OUR CHEMICAL CLOUD.

THE CHEMICAL COMPOUND WAS PUMPED OUT OF THE TANKS, RIGHT ACROSS THE PATH OF ACHOS.

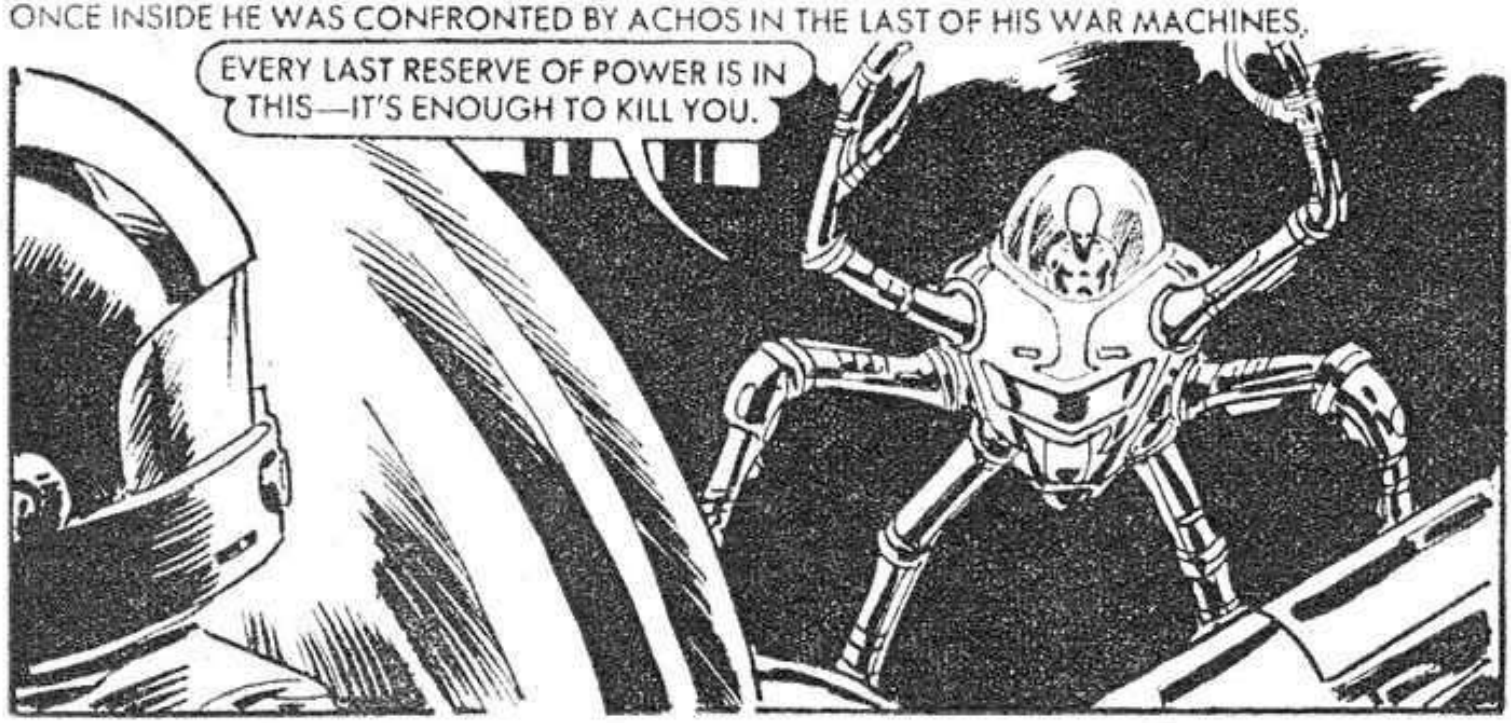

THE CLOUD WAS HIGHLY IONISED AND BLANKED OUT ALL COMMUNICATIONS AND SENSOR BANKS.

HADRON HAD CALCULATED THAT THE CLOUD WOULD COAT THE SOLAR PANELS AND MAKE THEM INEFFECTIVE.
THEY ARE WITHIN DESTRUCTOR BOLT RANGE. FAREWELL.

BUT THE CLOUD HAD DONE ITS JOB—
NO ENERGY . . .
I HAVE ALMOST COMPLETE POWER LOSS!
I WANT ACHOS ALIVE.
THE SPECIAL WEAPON IS READY FOR USE.


A CRAFT CAPTURED ON KREEGE HAD BEEN REPAIRED BY THE EXPERTS OF FI-SCI.
ONLY ONE OF HIS OWN MACHINES WILL HAVE A CHANCE OF CAPTURING ACHOS.

HADRON RIPPED INTO THE DEATHSTALKER'S HULL—
FI-SCI MECHANICS HAVE MADE THIS MONSTER AS GOOD AS NEW.


ONCE INSIDE HE WAS CONFRONTED BY ACHOS IN THE LAST OF HIS WAR MACHINES.
EVERY LAST RESERVE OF POWER IS IN THIS—IT'S ENOUGH TO KILL YOU.

THE CRAFT TORE INTO EACH OTHER—
THESE MACHINES ARE EQUALLY MATCHED, SO IT'S YOU AGAINST ME, ACHOS.

FOR LONG UNITS THE MACHINES FOUGHT, UNTIL—
AT LAST—I'M THROUGH HIS FORCE SHIELD.
A MIGHTY ARM PLUCKED ACHOS FROM HIS MACHINE—
I SHOULD CRUSH THE LIFE FROM YOU, BUT I SHALL LEAVE THE COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH YOU.

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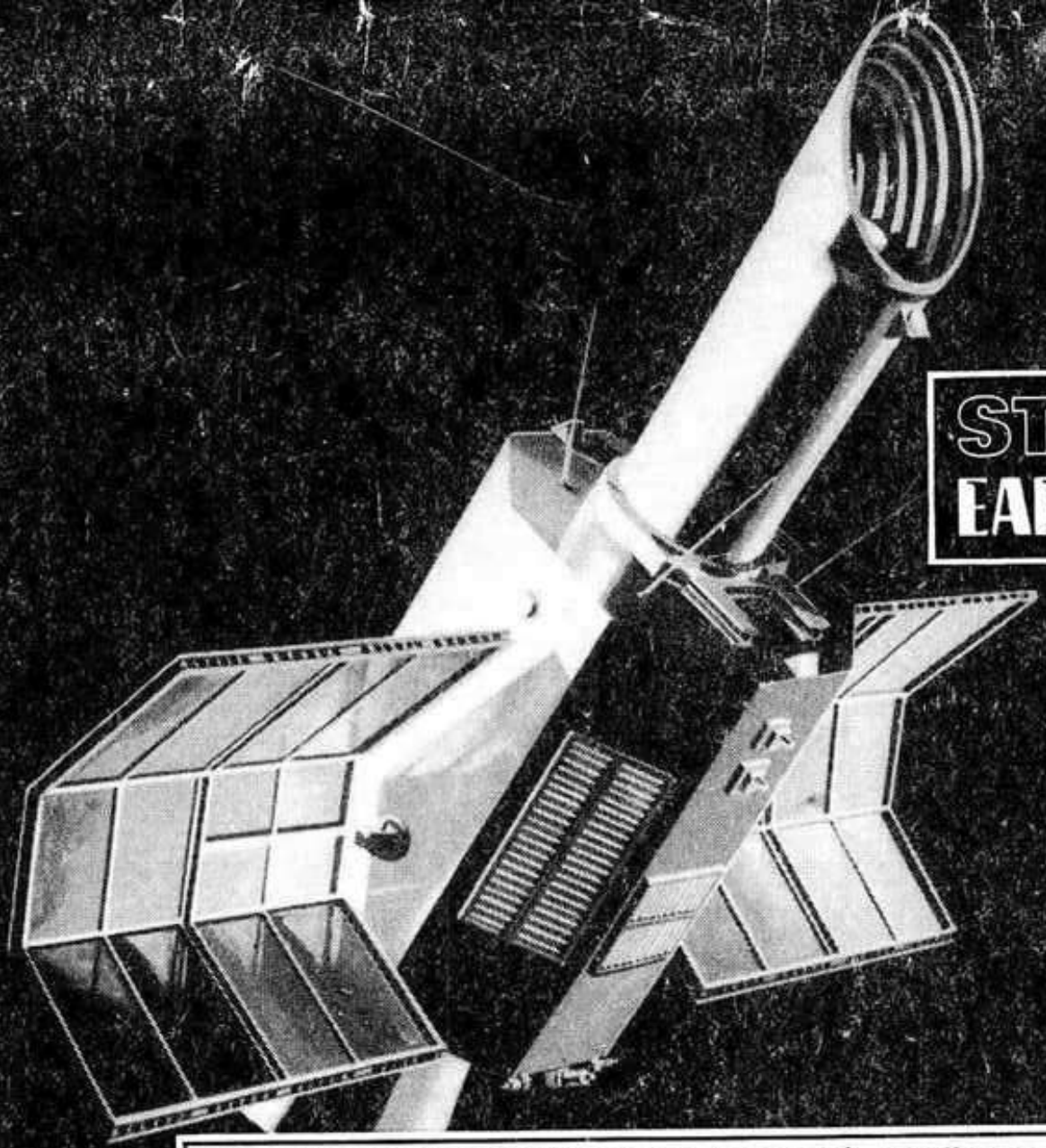
NOW THAT YOU'VE READ THIS

DON'T FORGET THAT THERE'S ANOTHER ONE THIS MONTH

IT'S ON SALE IN YOUR NEWSAGENT'S NOW!



STARBLAZERS 11
EARTH SATELLITES

IUE, (International Ultraviolet Explorer), studies a wide range of celestial objects through the ultra violet electro-magnetic spectrum to shed light on the nature of stars and the material from which they were formed. Within one year IUE had provided 9000 images of astronomical objects that could not have been obtained from the ground. The first IUE was launched in January, 1978 from America.